



# THE INDEPENDENT

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MONDAY 10 MARCH 1997

WEATHER: Sunshine and showers

(IR45p) 40p

PULL-OUT SECTION WITH 12 PAGES OF APPOINTMENTS

## Media+

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How to win votes at the Sun  
Wonderbra man bounces back



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First ever primary school national league tables

Government breaks own regulations

## Buried BSE cattle pose health risk

Anthony Bevins  
Political Editor

The Government has allowed more than 6,000 cattle carcasses suspected to have BSE to be buried in landfill sites across the country - in direct contravention of its own regulations.

The move was last night condemned as a "health hazard" and "grossly irresponsible" by the Labour MP Helen Jackson, who has been campaigning for greater openness about the cattle cull programme.

Because of fears that BSE could get into drinking water, or the food chain, both the Government and the European Union have insisted that carcasses should be incinerated.

As far back as June 1988, an official working party on BSE, chaired by Sir Richard Southwood, professor of zoology at Oxford University, recommended that "carcasses of affected animals should be destroyed".

In a 1995 "progress report" on BSE, the Ministry of Agriculture said that since August 1988 all suspect cases of BSE had been compulsorily slaughtered and destroyed.

But in a Commons written reply to the Opposition spokesman Gavin Strang on Thursday night, Douglas Hogg, Minister of Agriculture, said: "The total number of BSE suspect cases disposed of by landfill is approximately 6,120. This figure represents approximately 3 per cent of the total number of suspects slaughtered."



ber of suspects slaughtered."

Mr Hogg said it was not possible to say how many BSE-suspect carcasses had been buried at specific landfill sites since the crisis first broke, "as a complete set of records is not held centrally. To provide a complete record could only be done at disproportionate cost".

In other words the ministry does not know where the carcasses are buried, and it has no intention of finding out.

Neither did Mr Hogg specify the date of burials, but he did tell Dr Strang three carcasses had been buried last year.

Asked by Dr Strang to list the methods of disposal that he permitted, compared with the methods currently in operation, Mr Hogg did not provide an answer to the question.

Mr Hogg did not say that no material from BSE suspects is allowed to be buried in landfill

sites. However, a British Government paper submitted to the EU before last year's Florence summit said that 57 legal instruments had been passed between June 1988 and May 1996, including "a requirement that all cattle which are suspected of having BSE are ... destroyed."

Last month, in a written Commons reply, Ms Jackson was told by Tony Baldry, an agriculture minister: "Cattle suspected of showing clinical signs of the disease are disposed of by direct incineration in plants contracted to MAFF."

Mr Baldry said that BSE suspects were not slaughtered under the over-30-month scheme - the measure demanded by the EU as a pre-requisite for lifting the beef ban.

Ms Jackson subsequently raised the question of BSE burial in a Commons debate on 17 February, when she was told by Roger Freeman - the Cabinet Minister in charge of the cattle cull - "There are no mass graves in our countryside and there is no fear of disease."

Ms Jackson said last night: "I think it's scandalous that the minister has misled both by myself and Parliament ... There is clearly the potential of a health hazard, and this is grossly irresponsible."

Another 15 people were reported yesterday to have come forward in Lincolnshire complaining of symptoms that could be caused by the E. coli 0157 bacteria, bringing the number of reported cases to 215.



Loot: An Albanian woman waving a rifle seized from a state arsenal during a weekend protest in Sarande against President Berisha Photograph: Reuters

## Berisha bows to rebel pressure

Andrew Gumbel  
Gjrokaster

Young men drunk with the excitement of brandishing Kalashnikovs looted from army depots drove around the streets at break-neck speed and fired round after round into the air, to mark their victory.

"Berisha - come and get me if you want to," shouted one hooded teenager. He did not look as though he was about to hand in his weapon in a hurry.

The bursts of automatic gunfire were a response to the biggest climbdown yet by the Albanian regime. Under pressure from armed insurgents storming through the south of the country, President Sali Berisha of Albania yesterday caved in to demands for an all-party transitional government and new parliamentary elections.

Speaking live on state television, surrounded by opposition leaders invited to a round table discussion, the president promised an amnesty for civilians and military rebels if they hand in their weapons within a week.

"Last night I was categorical about the Socialist Party. But there are moral considerations," said a pale and drawn Mr Berisha. "Sometimes you have to choose morals over laws."

The crisis is not yet over. Mr Berisha has yet to name a new prime minister and precise conditions for the new election have not yet been worked out. The main opposition party, the Socialists, retired from the all-party talks yesterday to decide whether to take up the 10 Parliamentary seats they spurned

after last May's rigged general election. The crisis began two months ago, with riots sparked by the collapse of fraudulent investment schemes and has escalated to the verge of civil war.

Mr Berisha's attempt to assert dictatorial powers has been rebuffed by both the rebels and the international community, which has applied pressure this week.

The fall of Gjrokaster was the result of an ill-thought out incursion by government sponsored commandos. On Saturday, the townspeople backed by local security forces, chased 60-odd commandos away across

ned weapons from the centre of town, set up a training programme on handling guns, installed tanks and artillery at strategic points and organised a network of checkpoints.

He and other rebel leaders have pleaded for restraint, arguing that citizens should sit back and wait for a political solution. But many southerners are too angry to listen to reason.

"Berisha stole our votes, then he stole our money. We're not going to let him steal our lives as well," said a retired army officer in Delvina, near Saranda.

The fall of Gjrokaster underlined the helplessness of the government forces. There have been at least four commando attacks in the south in recent days. All have failed miserably. In Delvina, police and army cadets who came over the mountains were persuaded to leave again when confronted by an angry mob. In Saranda, a group of under-20-year-olds had their cars burned. One died inside his own vehicle while another was tied to a telegraph pole, beaten and forced to confess on video.

The commandos who came to Gjrokaster were ferried in by helicopter. But a huge crowd appeared, backed by the police and army. Most of the commandos fled, either in their helicopters or on foot.

For the past week the town has been balanced between pro and anti-government forces. Yesterday, the town was tense as young men looted shops and army installations, and town elders wrangled over the formation of a revolutionary council.

### INSIDE

"We are going to give up our weapons only when Berisha is no longer president"  
Emma Daly in Vlora, page 9

the mountains. A black Mercedes carrying the government-appointed mayor and his associates sped out of town with headlights blazing, heading for the Greek border 20 miles away.

A 14-year-old boy was killed in the pandemonium of celebratory shooting that followed.

Last night, there was no sign of government authority anywhere in the region. Police at the Greek border post of Kakavia gave up their guns and vanished.

The rebels now control a continuous stretch of territory from the port of Vlora down to Saranda, across to Gjrokaster and up to Tepelena and beyond.

In Saranda, a retired army colonel called Xhevat Koculi has been appointed head of the revolutionary council. He has ban-

## Soames orders Gulf cover-up questioning

Ian Burrell

Nicholas Soames, the armed forces minister, has ordered a crack team of military police investigators to question soldiers and senior civil servants over the cover-up of the use of dangerous pesticides in the Gulf War.

Members of the Royal Air Force Special Investigations Bureau (SIB) will today begin their inquiry to establish how information regarding the use of organophosphate pesticides in the conflict was withheld from ministers.

The cover-up led to Mr Soames having to make an apology in the House of Commons in December for wrongly informing the House that the pesticides were not used.

The investigation has been set up at the RAF SIB's base at Roudon Manor, Wiltshire, from where the plainclothes unit also investigates breaches of the Official Secrets Act, bullying and other disciplinary matters.

It is believed that the RAF police were assigned to the investigation because most of those who will be questioned will be Army personnel.

The investigators, who have been told to report promptly, will seek to establish the chain of command through which information on OPs was passed. Among those likely to be asked to help with the inquiry are Lieutenant Colonel John Graham, who was in charge of medical operations in the Gulf, along with Major SF Drysdale.

Both men were given detailed post-operational reports of the OP use by environmental health technicians involved in spraying the pesticides.

The reports, compiled by Staff Sergeant Anthony Worthington and Corporal AJ Hucklebury, included numerous complaints about the pesticides used and the lack of protective clothing for those applying it.

Li Col Graham, who was a Major during the war, was lat-

er promoted to the Defence Medical Services Directorate, in London. On 26 August last year, when Parliament was still unaware of the use of OPs in the Gulf, Li Col Graham circulated a document which said they were "extensively used". It read: "Pesticides, including a wide range of organophosphate compounds, were extensively used by British personnel during Operation GRABBY."

The briefing stated: "As [pesticides] were widely applied, all personnel in theatre will have been in contact to a lesser degree." The SIB is likely to question members of the Surgeon General's organisation, which was headed by Surgeon Vice Admiral Tony Revell in the period in question, and is now run by Air Vice Marshal John Baird.

Today *The Independent* publishes new photographic and documentary evidence revealing the extent of OP use during the war.

Veterans ignored, page 5

## Nursery vouchers rub teachers up the wrong way

Judith Judd  
Education Editor

Teachers are being invited to use their body heat to check thousands of nursery vouchers for forgery. The £1,100 vouchers for four-year-olds have just been sent out for the first year of the scheme which begins in April. Government guidelines to local authorities suggest that

vouchers should be checked for forgery by rubbing the specially-treated paper between the thumb and forefinger.

If the vouchers are genuine, body heat then turns the words "nursery education" from pink to off-white. But the plan has already hit a snag. Some cold-fingered teachers are finding that even determined rubbing fails to produce the required effect.

Teachers are also complain-

ing that administration of the scheme is bureaucratic enough without adding another task, however small, to their burden.

There are five vouchers per term for each child so teachers at school with 100 four-year-olds will have to thumb and finger check about 1,500 vouchers a year. Warm-fingered teachers will be able to complete the forgery test in a few seconds, but their cold-fingered colleagues

may take much longer. Mark Fletcher, a nursery teacher at Shakespeare primary school in Leeds, and member of the campaign against nursery vouchers, said: "I got the voucher to change colour quickly, but my head teacher was rubbing for at least a minute and nothing happened."

The suggested forgery test comes at the end of a list of checks outlined by the Depart-

ment for Education. Schools need to check that parents have signed the voucher, to sign or stamp each parent's voucher, write down the number of vouchers they are claiming on a form and keep all counterfoils for their records.

"It's very simple," a department spokeswoman said. But Margaret Hodge, Labour's early years spokeswoman, said: "This is another

example of insanity in the ludicrous voucher scheme. Teachers should be teaching children not rubbing bits of paper."

The department spokeswoman added: "We are not telling teachers they have to test the voucher. It's just if they suspect forgery ... The vouchers have been printed in such a way that the design on the back won't photocopy and is very difficult to print."

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## news

## significant shorts

## Working women losing out with personal pensions

More than half the people who bought personal pensions six years ago have not kept up regular contributions since, and face the risk of high-level charges eating into their investment, Labour spokesman John Denham said yesterday.

He said that 6 million working women were outside employers' occupational pension schemes, and 2 million had joined personal pension schemes. However, one-third of those women with personal pension schemes, had not made the necessary minimum contribution.

Mr Denham warned: "Peter Lilley's plans to force all women into personal pensions are badly undermined by the experience of women with personal pensions today. Today's working women are dropping out of their personal pensions on a massive scale."

Anthony Bevins.

## Labour denies secret fund claim

Labour yesterday hit out at a report claiming that Shadow Cabinet members were supported by a "secretive fund", saying it was based on the names of donors disclosed by the party. The *Sunday Times* reported that several "previously anonymous" millionaires had given money to the Labour Front Bench Research Fund. The names had been supplied under the party's policy of disclosing donations of more than £5,000 in any one year, but the *Sunday Times* report will keep up the pressure on the Labour leader's own "blind" trust, which - like a similar one for the deputy leader, John Prescott - does not disclose its donors.

John Rentoul

Leading article, page 14

## RAF fraud investigation launched

Royal Air Force pilots and navigators who flew over Bosnia to enforce the no-fly zone are being investigated after allegations of "fraudulent" expenses claims, the Ministry of Defence said yesterday. Military police have interviewed an undisclosed number of personnel from different ranks who served at Gioia del Colle in Italy while supporting Operation Resolute in late 1993.

The Ministry of Defence said those under investigation had not been suspended but refused to release further details. A spokeswoman would not confirm reports that the alleged fraud - linked to hotel and subsistence allowances - totalled £350,000 but she did say it was a "fairly unusual" case.

Matthew Brace

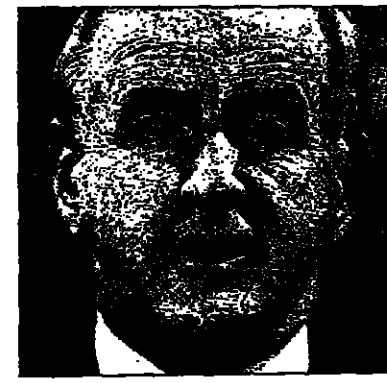
## 'Herald' tragedy's 10th anniversary

The Herald Families Association, formed 10 years ago after the sinking of the *Herald of Free Enterprise*, was formally wound up in Dover last night at the end of a series of events to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the tragedy. The decision came at the association's final meeting, chaired by international businessman Maurice de Rohan, who lost his daughter and son-in-law in the disaster which happened as the ferry left Zeebrugge in Belgium. Ferry services in Ramsgate, Kent, were brought to a standstill yesterday when more than 200 people had to be evacuated from the *Holyman Sally* catamaran after the vessel, attempting to dock in dense fog, hit a stationary ferry.

## Reynold's issues talks warning

The suspension of multi-party talks on the future of Northern Ireland was an "admission of failure" on the Ulster peace process by the London and Dublin governments, former Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds said yesterday.

Mr Reynolds (left) also repeated a call for paramilitary leaders on both sides in Northern Ireland to get together. "At the end, everybody is going to have to talk to everybody. If we continue in a vacuum, and with no activity, inevitably it may lead to a new leadership in Sinn Féin, which will be in my view more hardline than we have got," he warned.



## Labour attacked of U-turn on VAT

Labour was accused last night of making a U-turn on a Commons attempt to cut the value-added tax on energy conservation goods from 17.5 per cent to 8 per cent. Three organisations campaigning for the change - Help the Aged, Friends of the Earth and the Association for the Conservation of Energy - have written to Tony Blair asking him why Labour whips have pressured 19 Labour MPs into withdrawing their support from a Finance Bill amendment due to be taken in the Commons this week.

The letter says: "We recognise that you ... have tabled a much weaker amendment calling for a report on the implications of so reducing VAT on energy-saving goods and materials. However, this is no substitute for taking decisive action now." Anthony Bevins

## Blair urged to 'back or sack' Cook

Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, issued a challenge to Labour leader Tony Blair to "back or sack" shadow Foreign Secretary Robin Cook who caused fury by suggesting the views of top Tories could spark racism. Mr Dorrell said on BBC1's *Breakfast* with *Frost* that Mr Cook had "said some absolutely outrageous things about my colleagues", referring to his claim at the Scottish Labour Conference on Saturday, that the views on Europe of Michael Portillo, the Secretary of State for Defence, and former cabinet minister John Redwood were tied to racism and echoed the opinions of maverick Tory MP David Evans.

## Two killed in air crash

Two people were killed last night after a light aircraft crashed at Biggin Hill airfield in Kent. The aircraft came down in poor visibility shortly after taking off at about 4.30. Wreckage was found in the grounds of nearby Holwood House, Keston.

## Fifteen share lottery jackpot

Fifteen tickets shared Saturday's National Lottery jackpot of £8.3m. The winning numbers were 12, 29, 5, 39, 20, 42; bonus 22.

## people



Irene Higginson: "We want to reflect a holistic approach." Photograph: Adrian Dennis

## Professor with a mission to ease the pain for thousands

Professor Irene Higginson will today be named as Britain's first Professor of Palliative Care, which is now used by 100,000 people every year, although it was barely contemplated 30 years ago. Care of this sort - which focuses on the emotional and spiritual needs of the patient, as well as controlling pain - is most commonly used for cancer sufferers and those with HIV/AIDS.

Prof Higginson, one of the world's leading specialists in palliative care, feels this area of medicine will become even more important as the population ages. More people will die from chronic or progressive diseases and will need care that enhances the quality of their life for some time.

The new department will be set up as part of a joint development between St Christopher's Hospice and King's College, London.

"We want to reflect a holistic approach," said Prof Higginson. "By linking with a major teaching hospital we will be able to develop work which will have a real influence on health care policy nationally and will enable our special skills in pain and symptom control to be applied to help people in desperate need."

Prof Higginson qualified in medicine at Nottingham

University and has worked in general medicine, radiotherapy and oncology, but moved to work in palliative medicine, including working in a hospice herself.

She spent a year at the Department of Health, advising on health policy in the care of older people, and joins the new department from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

She said she was "amazed" to be appointed. "I really wanted the job. We have a saying in palliative care that people don't take bad news. In my case I couldn't take in the good news. I carried the letter around for two weeks, just looking at it."

Prof Higginson says her decision to take on the post stems from a long-held commitment to improve the quality of life for people suffering from cancer and other illnesses by raising the profile of palliative care.

"There is still a lot we don't know. I want to improve the care of people suffering progressive diseases of all different types, from all walks of life, and improve what happens to them through research and education. This is a new departure for palliative care and is a practical and important way of widening hospice care to help all those in need."

Glenda Cooper

## Mrs Scargill in double trouble

It was a busy Sunday morning yesterday for Anne Scargill (right), wife of the fearsome miners' champion, Arthur. She was arrested and released twice in five hours while protesting against an open cast mining development.

Mrs Scargill, 52, was among five demonstrators arrested at 5am near the home of Richard Budge, the owner of the RJB Mining company, at Weston in Nottinghamshire, and accused of causing a breach of the peace.

She later returned to the scene of her original arrest, about half a mile from Mr Budge's property, where she was again taken into custody just before 10am.

Being used to confined spaces - she spent five days on an underground protest with three other women at Parkside colliery near St Helens, Lancashire, in 1993 - Mrs Scargill was unperturbed by her experience.

"I've not been charged with anything, and I don't know why the police arrested me on either occasion," she said. "The officers who questioned me said their operation was called Operation Babylift, but being arrested twice makes me wonder whether it should be Operation Nappy Rash."

Mrs Scargill was there as a member of the No Open Cast campaign group protesting against RJB's policies. According to one of Mrs Scargill's colleagues, the protesters planned



to dig up Mr Budge's garden "to show what an open cast site looks like on his premises".

An RJB spokesman said the company had to meet stringent guidelines before it was granted permission to mine any site. He said No Open Cast had approached the company last week, demanding to be allowed to hand in a petition at Mr Budge's home.

"We refused to grant them that but offered to meet them at the company's offices or at another suitable venue," said the spokesman. "The next thing we know, they are off out trying to dig up the garden first thing in the morning."

He dismissed the group's claims that open cast mining was unnecessary and said open cast coal was crucial to RJB's ability to provide the quality of coal required by Britain's power stations.

Matthew Brace

## Royals reunited for William's confirmation

Prince Charles and his former wife buried their differences yesterday to join their 14-year-old son, Prince William, for his confirmation service at Windsor. Earlier, in an apparent spirit of reconciliation, the Waleses sat down to a Mother's Day lunch.

The 96-year-old Queen Mother was also present at the service, held in St George's Chapel, marking William's full membership of the Anglican Church, which one day he will head as Supreme Governor.

Diana's presence at the Windsor Castle lunch and service clearly meant a lot to William, who is known as the more sensitive of the Waleses' children. Absent was Prince Charles's aide, Tiggy Legge-Bourke, who acted almost as William's surrogate mother when he was younger.

The royal party was greeted at the 500-year-old St George's Chapel by the Rt Rev Richard Chartres, Bishop of London and Dean of the Chapels Royal, who conducted the service from the Book of Common Prayer.

The choice of the bishop, ahead of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, raised some eyebrows in Church circles. But the Prince of Wales is known to be an admirer of the bishop, who is a traditionalist and keen supporter of the Book of Common Prayer.

There were reports last night that the Prince of Wales presented William with a £65,000 pair of Asprey shotguns as a confirmation gift. If the claims are correct, the gift of guns - on the anniversary of the Dunblane shootings - will further enrage the anti-gun lobby and campaigners against blood sports.

## briefing

## SOCIETY

## Traditional family roles increasingly eroded

The traditional image of the family, with Dad going out to work and Mum staying at home, has been dramatically rejected during the last decade. Whereas in 1984 the majority of men still subscribed to traditional gender roles, they are now in the minority, with a fifth fewer believing this and even fewer women prepared to stay at home.

A two-year research study, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, which analysed data from 5,000 British households, found there was no evidence of a backlash against women's rights to work and four out of five women said they would work if there was adequate childcare.

Both men and women reject the idea that women's work has a negative impact on family life, although relatively few of either sex have any illusion that employment is a panacea and think that a woman and her family will be happier if she goes out to work.

Despite changing attitudes, the demise of the family has been greatly exaggerated, the study found. Regardless of individual circumstances, family issues and events are still what matter most in people's lives.

Glenda Cooper

## CHILDBIRTH

## Caesarian delivery burden on NHS

More than half of all babies could be delivered by Caesarean section within 10 years - at huge cost to the NHS, an expert predicts today. Professor Nicholas Fisk, professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at the Queen Charlotte and Chelsea Hospital in London said he believed more and more women would opt for the "safe" operation, which was already thought to be on the increase in nine out of 10 hospitals.

But the NHS is likely to feel the pain, as a new report is expected to show that a Caesarean section costs more than three times the price of a natural birth.

An Audit Commission report, to be published next week, will show that it costs about £360 for a baby to be born naturally, while a Caesarean costs up to £1,100, according to the BBC1 *Have and Now* programme, to be screened this evening.

About 16 per cent of all babies in Britain are born by Caesarean, and that figure is rising on average about 1 per cent a year. The Audit Commission is expected to show that this additional 1 per cent costs the NHS an extra £5m every year.

Caesareans are only performed on medical grounds but Professor Fisk said he, and many of his colleagues, would be prepared to perform the operation on demand.



## BROADCASTING

## World Service audience grows

The global audience for the BBC World Service has grown to 143 million listeners each week, according to figures released today. It marks an increase of 3 million on last year's audience figure.

The number of listeners who tune in to local re-broadcasts on FM or medium wave, rather than the traditional short wave broadcasts, has increased from 20 million to 26 million. The main increases in audiences came from re-broadcasts in Poland, and in French for Africa.

New research in 10 Chinese cities, Bangladesh, the Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, found new World Service listeners, but difficult areas such as Burma, Cuba and Iran and vast areas of China remain unsurveyed.

The BBC World Service's Albanian broadcasts on short wave were recently increased in the light of the political crisis and the closure of the BBC World Service FM transmitter in that country.

## HEALTH

## Thousands suffering in silence

Thousands of people with stomach upsets caused by irritable bowel syndrome suffer in silence because they are too embarrassed to seek help, according to a survey published today. The findings show that two-in-five people - 43 per cent - believe the most embarrassing thing to ask for in a pharmacy is treatment for a bowel problem. Asking for such treatment was far more embarrassing than asking for condoms, they said.

More than 15 per cent of those questioned also admitted that at some stage they had gone without treatment, preferring to suffer in silence rather than talk to a doctor or pharmacist.

The nationwide telephone survey conducted on behalf of Pharmacia and Upjohn coincides with an appeal from the Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) charity to raise public awareness about bowel disorders. Dr David Silk, IBS Appeal's director of research, said IBS was a debilitating condition which affected millions of adults, although only an estimated 25 per cent had consulted their doctor.

Irritable bowel syndrome, the most common disorder of the intestine, affects twice as many women as men. There is no cure, but peppermint oil and other over-the-counter remedies available in pharmacies can relieve symptoms.

## PRISONS

## Dartmoor 'dungeon' should close

The punishment block for unruly inmates at Dartmoor Prison looks and feels like a "Victorian dungeon", an official inspection report into the jail says. The report argues that the unit should be shut, unless major improvements are made immediately, as it is not a "suitable environment for segregated prisoners".

But overall, Sir David Ramsbotham, the chief inspector of prisons, concluded the jail was well managed, with good relations between staff and inmates - a big improvement since the last official report, in 1992.

The then chief inspector of prisons, Judge Stephen Tumim, said Dartmoor was the "dustbin" of the Prison Service for unwanted prisoners and should be closed by 1994 if it was not reformed and modernised.

Sir David was able to be far more positive, in the light of a £35m programme of refurbishments to the prison, which opened in 1809 to hold French prisoners from the Napoleonic War.



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# Record industry joins battle against fly-by-night fan clubs

Paul McCann  
Media Correspondent

The British Phonographic Industry will today host the latest stage in a four-year battle by teenage pop fans to get a fair deal from fan clubs.

The meeting has been organised by *Short Change*, the children's consumer pro-

gramme on BBC1, which has been campaigning against fan clubs which take money from young fans and often give them little or nothing in return.

*Short Change* wants the representatives of PolyGram, MCA Music and reputable fan clubs who will be present to set up a trade association.

Hundreds of fan clubs exist

in the UK, many legitimate and run by friends of the bands as a labour of love in the spare bedroom. But there are also many fly-by-night operations working out of post office box numbers.

The intention of today's meeting is to set out rules of association for prospective members and to come up with a seal

of approval that can be withdrawn for bad behaviour. It will also give fans someone to complain to.

Around 70 per cent of complaints received by *Short Change* refer to fan clubs that rip off their members.

A typical experience is that of a 13-year-old from London who sent £83 to teen band

Backstreet Boys' fan club for a selection of merchandise. After six weeks she had received nothing and only after the programme intervened did she receive a pair of boxer shorts, a cushion and a book on the band written in German.

Often fans receive nothing at all, says Gilly Longton, a *Short Change* producer. "You

wouldn't send a cheque off for a holiday without seeing an Abba sign, so there should be something similar for fan clubs." The amounts may be smaller for teenagers' fan clubs, but says Ms Longton, they are large for a teenagers' pocket.

The television programme, which is broadcast on Sunday mornings and is virtually un-

known in the adult world, received no help when it approached MPs and the Office of Fair Trading. However, Ms Longton was helped by contacts in the record industry and has managed to elicit the support of some of the industry's heavy hitters.

"We spend a fortune creating and promoting the image of our

artists," says Gary Farrow, vice president of group communications at Sony Music. "So we don't want it jeopardised by some over-enthusiastic band manager who can't handle a fan club, or worse, those that cash the fans' cheques with no intention of supplying anything. They ought to remember that with no fans, there are no record sales."



William Faulkner: Tale of a woman's body being carried to funeral

## Booker man hits back at accuser

Swift rejects criticism that work copies another

Nicole Veash

The Booker Prize winner Graham Swift hit back yesterday at suggestions that his award-winning book was not original.

The nation's literati paused for a sharp intake of breath after accusations that Mr Swift's *Last Orders* bore close structural similarities to William Faulkner's American classic *As I Lay Dying*.

But Mr Swift said he was amazed at claims that his work was not original. He said that he would be answering the allegations against him point-by-point in a detailed letter to his accuser, Professor John Frow, of Queensland University.

Writing in *The Australian Review of Books*, Professor Frow argued that in *Last Orders* Mr Swift had extensively borrowed style and form from the earlier work without giving a "knowing nod" of acknowledgement towards Faulkner.

In his defence, Mr Swift told *The Independent*: "These claims are absolutely absurd."

"The link between the two books is something that has already been mentioned... One reviewer prominently discusses this very point and praises the way I have drawn on Faulkner. The two books are about different worlds and different people, written in a different form of the English language."

But the link between them is not the main point of my novel. I am drawing on archetypal ideas which have been constantly re-worked through the ages."

Professor Frow alleges that Faulkner's transportation of the dead Addie Bundren to her funeral in Jefferson, Mississippi, is used in a "direct and unacknowledged imitation" by Mr Swift, whose cen-

J'accuse ...

Accusations have been levelled at many great, and not so great, writers, including:

Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Extensively borrowed work from earlier Romantics and German authors for his heady poetry.

TS Eliot: Recent charges of pilfering in his "many voices" poem, *The Waste Land*.

The Duchess of York: Allegedly lifted the idea of *Budgie the Helicopter*.

Hugh MacDiarmid: Used a short story by a Welsh writer and a review from the *Times Literary Supplement* in one of his poems.

DM Thomas: Borrowed extensively from a Russian author for his 1981 Booker prize-winning novel *The White Hotel*.

ashes carried from London to Margate to be scattered by his friends. But Mr Swift maintains his story draws on 1,000 years of literary tradition. "The book looks at the age-old idea of how living people deal with the death of their relatives."

"This is a very basic story and it is not exclusive to any writer. Each generation retells the tale in their own way. It is even more common than stories about falling in love."

As *I Lay Dying*, published in 1930, is renowned for the narrative's alternating voices, recounting the journey from different viewpoints,

The same technique was famously used by Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales* and has been popular with authors for generations.

Mr Swift said: "In my first novel I alternated between different narrative story-tellers and I didn't get accused of plagiarism then."

Other supposed similarities include: chapters headed with a person's name; a chapter made up of numbered points and a chapter made up of a single sentence.

Mr Swift acknowledges drawing on an earlier literary work for his short chapter, "Vince", which consists of the sentence "Old buggers". The Bible can safely claim to have the first short chapter in literary history. It reads: "Jesus wept."

The poet and critic Blake Morrison, who has researched the murky vaults of literary plagiarism, said: "It has always been a legitimate practice to draw on earlier works and in some eras, such as the 18th century, authors were expected to allude to previous authors."

"I think the real difference is between allusion and theft. If an author lifts paragraphs word for word then it is fair to say that this constitutes plagiarism."

"We should always expect novels to echo earlier books because there are only so many plots that writers can draw upon."

"In this instance the case seems rather thin. Although the two works have similarities in form they are completely different in content."

Mr Swift remains an admirer of Faulkner's novel. "It is a great book. I first read it 25 years ago, although I didn't read it when writing *Last Orders*. I suppose great books always stay with you. I just hope that mine stay with people as well."



Graham Swift: Story about ashes being taken for seaside scattering

## Gardiner: Tories will go 'down the pan' in election

Anthony Bevins  
Political Editor

The Conservatives are going "down the pan" at the next election, Sir George Gardiner, the party's latest backbench defector, said yesterday.

Already sacked as Conservative candidate for his Reigate constituency at the next election, Sir George announced on Saturday he was switching to the Referendum Party, to become their first, and probably last, MP.

Sir George said yesterday: "I find it very hard to find a Conservative Member of Parliament that actually thinks we are going to win the next election. I mean John Major might, but he's about the only one."

"Tory seats are going to go down the pan with an almighty flush when the election comes. And the writing was on the wall, wasn't it, at the Wirral? The Tory backbenchers are by no means illiterate."

As for the views of his former Conservative colleagues, Sir George told BBC television's *On the Record*: "All I can say is that my phone has certainly been buzzing this morning with calls from my colleagues, MPs, saying, 'Well done, George, the best of luck... five or six, something like that.'"

Sir George said he had been "driven out" of the Tory party by Mr Major's fence-sitting on the issue of the European single currency.

His language was more graphic in a Sunday newspaper article, in which he said: "John Major just will not listen. Instead the cheeks of his bottom hold the top of the fence tightly in their grip."

The latest defection puts the Conservatives into a minority of three votes in the Commons.

However, with an election due to be held on 1 May at the latest, there is no chance of Mr Major being forced into a precipitate request for a dissolution, as neither Sir George nor the Ulster Unionists plan to bring the Prime Minister down.

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, said yesterday that there were "very, very, very few people" who

backed the Referendum Party's demand for a vote on the future of the United Kingdom in the European Union.

But he warned that the Referendum Party posed a very real threat. Mr Heseltine told BBC radio's *The World this Weekend* that "the danger [is] that if you vote for a Referendum candidate, you're more likely to get a socialist government doing exactly the opposite to what you want."

That warning was underlined by John Redwood, who told Sky television's *Sunday* programme that while there was no question of the Referendum Party winning seats, with only 2 per cent support in the polls, there could be a risk of a split Tory vote.



Changed colour: Sir George Gardiner, Alan Howarth, John Horam, William Rodgers, John Stonehouse, Dick Taverne

## Defectors find it hard to stay seated

John Rentoul

Very few defectors in postwar British politics have held on to their seats at the following general election. Of 27 Labour MPs who left in 1981 to join the SDP, only two are still in the Commons: Robert Maclellan, the Liberal Democrat president, and John Horam, now a Tory junior minister.

Bruce Douglas-Mann, the only one who did the honourable thing by resigning his seat to fight a by-election, lost *Midham* in 1982 to Tory Angela Rumbold.

Earlier, Jim Sillars and John Robertson defected from Labour to set up the Scottish Labour Party in 1976. They lost their seats in 1979. But Mr Sillars, who in 1981 joined the SNP and married Margo MacDonald, a former SNP MP who had won the spectacular Glas-

gow Govan by-election in 1973, returned to the Commons by repeating his wife's trick in 1988.

The problem for right-wing, Euro-sceptic Tories is that there is no obvious party to which they can defect. The closest parallel with the case of Sir George Gardiner is probably Enoch Powell. He gave up his seat in Wolverhampton in February 1974, and urged a vote for Labour as the lesser of two evils, because Harold Wilson had promised a referendum on Europe. He returned to the Commons that October as the Ulster Unionist MP for Down South. Great Defections:

Sir George Gardiner: Conservative to Referendum Party; March 1997. Once leader of the largest faction of backbench Tory MPs, the right-wing 92 Group. Discovery of differences of principle with the

Prime Minister no doubt entirely unrelated to recent defection by local Tory association in Reigate.

Alan Howarth: Conservative to Labour; October 1995. Right-wing Tory minister who developed a social conscience to become first Tory-to-Labour floor-crosser. Still hoping to be drafted as last-minute candidate in safe Labour seat.

John Horam: Labour to SDP to Conservative; March 1981, February 1987. Lost his Gateshead seat in 1983. Took the slow route to Thatcherism but only got back into the House, for Orpington, in 1992, after she had gone. Still entirely unfamous as junior health minister.

William Rodgers: Labour to SDP; March 1981. Only four of the 27 Labour MPs who de-

fected to the SDP survived the 1983 general election. Former transport minister Bill Rodgers was not one of them. Fellow Gang of Four member Shirley Williams, elected in Crosby by-election in 1982, also lost.

John Stonehouse: Labour to English National Party; April 1976. Former Postmaster-General who ran off with his secretary and faked his suicide in Australia. His defection, just before disqualification and jail for fraud, cost Jim Callaghan his government's majority.

Dick Taverne: Labour to Democratic Labour; October 1972. *Homo Proto-Socialdemocraticus* who resigned to fight and win a by-election on a pro-Europe platform. Held his Lincoln seat in February 1974 and only lost in October to anti-EEC Margaret Jackson, now Beckett.

## GET UP TO SPEED

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Self Assessment - a clearer tax system



# Pro-choice lobby derides Cardinal's cash offer

Matthew Brace

A bold offer of financial support for pregnant women who want an alternative to abortion, given by the leader of Scotland's Roman Catholic Church, was strongly criticised yesterday as a false promise.

Archbishop of Glasgow, Cardinal Thomas Winning, pledged to help "any woman, of any religion, of any ethnic background, from anywhere, who is pregnant and in need".

Speaking to the Scottish conference of the anti-abortion pressure group the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, Cardinal Winning offered "help" in the form of pregnancy tests, counselling, help with raising a baby, adoption and financial assistance with equipment for the baby. He urged women to contact the archdiocesan office in Glasgow from today before making "one of the biggest mistakes of your life".

However, he failed to give details on exactly what help would be available, how aid to pregnant women would be financed, or how to get in touch. The Catholic church in Scotland gets all its funding from its flock or from private donations. Last year, an appeal by the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund raised £2m for Third World causes. However, Cardinal Winning's spokesman, Father Noel Barry, said yesterday that no special fund had been set up to support any pregnant women who might come calling on the church after the offer of help. About 160,000 abortions were carried out in England and Wales last year, at a cost of at least £40m. He admitted that the cardinal had not produced a budget or estimates to cope with an influx of pleas for financial assistance. "How much we give to each woman will depend on the individual's circumstances," he said. "The church is not in the business of needs means-testing."

If the cardinal's offer does prompt a flood of calls, church aides appeared confident that the money would come from somewhere. "That is one of the greatest challenges in an initiative like this," said Father Barry. "We will rely on God. We are a people of faith."

The pro-choice National Abortion Campaign called the offer a publicity stunt. Its chairwoman, Anne Marie Keary, said the statement trivialised the decision-making process around abortion "by implying that women can be bought."

Cardinal Winning seriously said that the Catholic church is going to be able to support women financially so that they can continue with unwanted pregnancies? I think not.

Anti-abortion campaigners welcomed the open offer and the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children discounted fears that it could lead to a flood of women demanding cash. The cardinal's speech also prompted a reply from the Labour leader, Tony Blair yesterday. A leadership source said: "He [Mr Blair] is not in favour of abortion. Nobody can be in favour of abortion, but as a legislator he does not feel that he can use the criminal law against those faced with this awful choice."

## Ashdown defends Lib-Lab electoral pact

Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

Paddy Ashdown defended the Liberal Democrats' constitutional deal with Labour yesterday amid criticism from some within his party.

The Liberal Democrat leader told the spring conference in Cardiff that the agreement on electoral reform and devolution would give the party's policies a voice over the next five years. In a wide-ranging speech which attacked both Labour and the Tories for "can't-be-done" politics, Mr Ashdown hinted that the talks which ended last week would safeguard the Liberal Democrats' place in the history of the late 20th-century.

Giving the Scots and Welsh more say via their own assemblies and people across the United Kingdom more power in their communities, was part of the party's "historic mission".

"We have, through choice, been able to work and agree with the Labour Party in this crucial area - despite our different values, our different policies, our different philosophies and our different beliefs."

"Now that may be criticised by some. But it will be a great source of hope for millions in Britain who despair of politicians ever working together for the good of the country," he said.

There had been complaints from some Welsh Liberal De-



Man with a mission: Paddy Ashdown addressing the Liberal Democrats' spring conference in Cardiff yesterday

Photograph: Paul Stuart

mocrats that the party's new entente with Labour would make their jobs more difficult on the doorstep. Floating voters in marginal seats would be tempted to argue that they might as well vote Labour if the two parties appeared close, they said.

Dai Davies, prospective candidate for Ceredigion, had accused the leadership of going "hand in hand" with Labour.

Mr Ashdown also used his speech to spell out in more detail his party's policy of putting an extra penny on income tax for education. The plan would cost the average family only 45p per week, he said, but would raise a substantial sum for every school. A typical primary school with 250 pupils would gain £16,000 per year, while a secondary school with 1,000 pupils would gain £110,000. Every child born in 1997 would be entitled to a nursery place by 2000, and by the end of the next parliament, no child under 11 would be in a class of more than 30.

"If you don't think giving these children that chance is worth an extra 45p a week, then it's simple. Don't vote for us," he said. "Our politics is dominated by fatalism and timidity

by the idea that the British people are a bunch of mean-minded misery-cuts, as obsessed with tax as politicians and the press. Well, we say they're not. It's time we stopped treating them like children."

A spokesman for Mr Ashdown brushed aside suggestions made in a Sunday newspaper that he was trying to "hush up" the imminent birth of his first grandchild. He said Mr Ashdown was delighted that his daughter Katie, 31, who lives in France, was expecting a baby soon after the election.

Far from worrying about what becoming a grandfather would do to the 57-year-old politician's status as an "action man," he was "looking forward to being able to say, 'we are a grandfather,'" the spokesman said.

## Dorrell bids to sell homes for elderly

Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

Stephen Dorrell is taking an election gamble by publishing a White Paper this week proposing to privatise council social services, including homes for the elderly. The proposal is as radical as Peter Lilley's plan to privatise pensions.

It will be seen as evidence that the Tories are trying to close the gap with Labour by adopting more radical policies.

Mr Dorrell will also today announce private insurance schemes for long-term care for the elderly in council-run residential homes, which could be privatised if the Tories win the election.

Ministerial sources last night denied the plans for social services had been watered down because it was feared they would be a vote-killer. "I don't think anyone looking at this White Paper will say it is soft. It will be like the pensions announcement in its radicalism," one Whitehall insider said.

The proposal would tilt the grants system from government to requiring local authorities to pay the private sector to supply up to 85 per cent of the services currently provided by council social services departments.

Mr Dorrell has told officials he does not want a "level playing field" between councils and the private sector in the provision of social services. "He wants to tilt the playing field towards the private sector," said another Whitehall source.

The White Paper is ready to be published on Wednesday, but the timing will be decided by a Cabinet committee chaired today by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, at Downing Street.

The proposals will form part of the Tory election manifesto. They will be seen as part of Mr Dorrell's strategy to establish his credentials with the right wing alongside Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, who announced his plans for privatising pensions last week.

Mr Dorrell will also announce long-delayed proposals for encouraging more people to take out private insurance to cover the cost of long-term care in their old age. The plans will be carried in a draft Bill to be taken through Parliament if the Tories win the election.

The Health Secretary said on BBC Breakfast with Frost that the means test will be made more generous to allow patients who have insurance to retain assets worth £150 for every £1 worth of insurance cover. It means a pensioner with £10,000 of cover would be able to keep assets of £15,000 on top of the current disregard of £16,000 before means testing would bite.

The Prime Minister promised action in the spring in 1996 following protests from elderly Tory supporters who were being forced to sell their homes - assets which they wished to pass on to their children - in order to pay for long-term care, before they qualified for means-tested state care.

## Major gives coded push to Bletchley Park project

Colin Brown  
Chief political correspondent

A thinly coded message has been sent by the Prime Minister to trustees of the Millennium Fund to reverse their decision turning down national lottery money to preserve the "Enigma" code-breakers headquarters for the nation.

A rambling mansion at Bletchley Park was the home of the wartime code-breakers, where the Enigma riddle was unravelled in the biggest single intelligence blow against Hitler's Nazi forces.

But the Millennium Fund turned down an appeal by the Bletchley Park Trust for funds to turn the site into a permanent museum. Historians believe that the site, sold to British Telecom, urgently needs preserving for the nation, and now John Major has stepped in.

The Prime Minister has sent a clear, thinly coded message to the Millennium Fund and the trust supporters to resubmit a proposal which will be acceptable. "Bletchley is very important and I know they are redesigning a lottery application."

"I think they applied in the wrong fashion last time. They are now reapplying and I think they will put in a very powerful bid, and the first thing is to see if they are successful in their bid to the lottery. Clearly, it is a very important place and I think everyone would wish it success."

The trust supporters met Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, last week to protest at the failure of their bid for Millennium funding from National Lottery money.

She told campaigners that Bletchley was of "great historical value for the nation and I share the understandable public concern for the future of the place."

Mrs Bottomley insisted the decision did not rest with ministers. "Decisions on it are made by the National Heritage



The Millennium Fund has turned down Bletchley's appeal

Memorial Fund trustees and not the Government." But she "hoped a way would be found to save Bletchley Park and its collection of wartime artifacts for the nation".

Those campaigning for Bletchley to be preserved include Robert Harris, author of the novel *Enigma*, which is being turned into a Hollywood film. Writing in the *Daily Mail*, he said: "Bletchley is not - at least not yet - a ruin. Visitors can see the mansion into which the code-breakers moved in 1939 and the out-buildings in which Alan Turing and Gordon Welchman later designed the 'bombe' - the huge de-crypter which broke the Nazis' Enigma ciphers."

Visitors can also see the famous wooden huts - three, six, four and eight - in which the code-breakers worked and a running replica of Colossus, the world's first programmable computer, which has been reassembled to the original plans, and which helped to break the Nazis' complex coded war time messages.

## Ulster minister embroiled in sectarian harassment case

David McGillick  
Ireland Correspondent

Baroness Denton, the minister responsible for countering religious discrimination in Northern Ireland, has become embroiled in a case of sectarian harassment within her own private office.

The case, and the Government's handling of its disclosure, have led to calls for Baroness Denton's resignation. The case has become an embarrassment in the province and shows signs of spreading to the United States where it could threaten efforts to attract investment.

Fair employment remains a touchstone issue in Northern Ireland. While the Government has made efforts to combat discrimination, the general nationalist judgement is that inequities persist in many areas. Compensation awards in discrimination cases are quite common, but this case is unusual in that a Government minister was directly involved in events. The embarrassment is made all the sharper by the fact that, as Economy minister, Baroness Denton has responsibility for fair employment legislation.

Last month it was announced that a Catholic woman, Grainne Hedley, had been paid £10,000 in settlement of a harassment claim. She was supported in her action by the government-appointed Fair Employment Commission, but only the

sparsest of details were given. Almost everything which subsequently came to light did so as a result of a campaign in the *Belfast Irish News*. It emerged that Ms Hedley had worked in the baroness's private office as her diary secretary, and she had been moved out of the office after intervention by the minister.

One of her complaints was that during the 1995 Orange march stand-off in Drumcree, the minister's personal secretary, Mrs Saunders, had announced with "some pleasure" that Orangemen were being allowed to parade through a Catholic area. Less than three weeks after this episode Ms Hedley was told - by Mrs Saunders - that she was being transferred out of the office.

In settling the case, the government apologised to Ms Hed-

ley, conceded there had been sectarian harassment and admitted it had failed to promote a harmonious working environment. Mrs Saunders received a written warning.

One of the charges levelled at the Government is that of being "economical with the truth". An initial statement denied the minister had been involved in having Ms Hedley moved, but this position was adjusted after the *Irish News* produced a confidential memorandum showing that the baroness had asked for her to be transferred. Baroness Denton then said she had suggested a transfer but insisted she had not then known of "any issues of a sectarian nature having arisen in my private office".

The Northern Ireland Office said yesterday the minister had no intention of resigning.

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**Gulf War sickness:** Testimonies the MoD cut out of report are revealed as MPs see new evidence

# Veterans ignored in Whitehall inquiry

Reports by Ian Burrell

Staff Sergeant Anthony Worthington walked along the corridors of the Ministry of Defence building in Whitehall on 14 November with a new confidence in his step.

Sgt Worthington believed he had the answers which would solve the riddle of the Gulf War illnesses which left 1,200 of his comrades sick and debilitated. He had photographs and documents to show exactly how troops were exposed to dangerous pesticides and he believed the MoD, at last, wanted to listen.

For five years the ministry had repeatedly denied that British troops were exposed to dangerous chemicals in the war. Then last October, Nicholas Soames, the armed forces minister, admitted that troops used organophosphate pesticides to ward off desert pests.

If anybody should have known what happened it was Sgt Worthington. As senior environmental health technician for 4th Armoured brigade he was responsible for administering the pesticide sprays. Yet to Sgt Worthington's dismay he was treated with what he regarded as cynicism and hostility. Much of his evidence never featured in the report of the MoD's Organophosphate Pesticide Investigation Team.

Today *The Independent* publishes the photographic and documentary evidence which shows that troops with no training and no protective clothing were told to spray camps with pesticides which were not intended for public hygiene use. Untrained Saudis and Filipinos guest workers were hired to go through the camps dousing tents with pesticides.

Veterans have testified that they were drenched with chemicals even while eating and sleeping. Among them was Major Christopher Irwin, of the Royal Artillery. "I remember on more than one occasion eating in a mess tent while pest decontamination was in progress. I tried to cover my food as the fog settled on everything but continued to inhale the stuff." At the Al Jubail camps, where many of the British troops were based, Larry Cam-

mock, an RAMC medic, was eating in a bar when his meal was interrupted.

Two Filipino employees came into the canteen area with a sprayer each and continued to spray the walls and rafters," he said.

"I and the other British servicemen had to pass through the mist to get out of the entrance. Outside we were all coughing and our eyes were running."

Both men are now displaying the symptoms of Gulf War illness. So is Shaun Rustling, another medic who has testified that while serving at Al Jubail, he was exposed to Fenitrothion and Diazinon OPs.

He said: "I slept amongst it I ate amongst it. I was even covered while on the toilet."

As the spraying continued, large numbers of British troops began falling ill with diarrhoea and nausea as well as skin and respiratory problems.

*The Independent* has seen restricted health and hygiene reports documents prepared by Maj John Graham, in charge of medical operations in the Gulf.

One report, dated 4 December 1990, when the troops were first being exposed to the sprays, states: "Almost one-third of all cases admitted to hospital have diarrhoea and vomiting."

The most alarming piece of evidence given by Sgt Worthington to the MoD investigators was that Neocidal 60, a winter sheep deep wholly inappropriate for public hygiene use, had been used by mistake.

The label was in Arabic but Sgt Worthington said he was assured by an officer that the pesticide was Blattanex 20, a far weaker carbamate insecticide.

The spraying team became so ill that they sought a translation of the label from a Jordanian doctor who identified it as the powerful Neocidal 60, based on the OP Diazinon.

Troops were issued with Malathion dusting powder which they used without protection. *The Independent* has seen a priority Army letter, issued in January, which orders immediate recall of Malathion "due to increased parliamentary interest". It says: "Malathion is not approved under the control of pesticides regulations and is not (not) to be used."

## Mustard gas in Saudi Arabia

A Czech army chemical specialist has revealed new information on how he detected traces of mustard gas while serving in the Gulf conflict.

Lieutenant Colonel Jiri Aberle was a member of an anti-chemical weapons team sent to the Gulf at the behest of Saudi Arabia because of its specialist knowledge of chemical warfare.

The 198-strong unit reported to Saudi military command and was equipped with the most sophisticated chemical and biological warfare detectors.

Lt-Col Aberle, writing in the current issue of *Applied Science and Analysis*, a specialist American journal for nuclear, biological and chemical defence experts, reveals that the unit clearly detected the presence of mustard gas close to the military city of King Khalid on 19 January 1991.

He writes: "I started to op-

erate my ChP-71 [chemical detector]. In several minutes I saw a colour change in the mustard tube. The yellow colour of the tube changed slightly to brown and a reddish brown ring appeared."

Lt-Col Aberle reports that the same day an American detection team, 3km away, made detections of sarin and mustard gases.

The mustard gas samples were not concentrated enough to show up in later laboratory tests but Lt-Col Aberle said that did not surprise him.

Records recently released in America show that US Fox chemical and biological detection vehicles took seven positive readings for nerve and mustard gas at sites in northern Saudi Arabia and southern Iraq during the war.

British troops have reported mass sightings of dead animals in the Gulf and some believe that chemical weapons were responsible.



Pest control: Soldiers in the Gulf said they were constantly drenched in pesticides, even while eating and sleeping

## Tests that link troops to illness

New medical evidence that Gulf War illness was caused by the use of chemicals in the conflict has been presented to the Commons Defence Select Committee.

Privately-funded research by Dr Goran Jamal, a consultant neurophysiologist, found "little doubt" that veterans became seriously ill after their exposure to pesticides and other chemicals in the desert.

Dr Jamal, who is based at the Institute of Neurological Science at Southern General Hospital, Glasgow, was funded to carry out extensive tests on two veterans who were exposed to organophosphate pesticides (OPs). One soldier had been required to carry out pesticide spraying after having taken several inoculations and NAPS tablets as protection against chemical weapon attacks.

The veteran now has a series of long-term neurobehavioural symptoms, including memory loss, mood swings and tiredness.

Dr Jamal concluded the soldier had suffered permanent damage and had "little doubt his present problems are related to his exposure to pesticides and the other risk factors which he encountered in the Gulf".

Tests on a second veteran, whose tent was sprayed with OPs, also linked his neurological condition to the combination of OPs, NAPS and "low-level chemical warfare agents" in the Gulf.

The results support tests carried out on 14 veterans by Dr Jamal two years ago. He recently resigned from a panel advising government departments on the effects of OPs on human health owing to establishment opposition to his work.

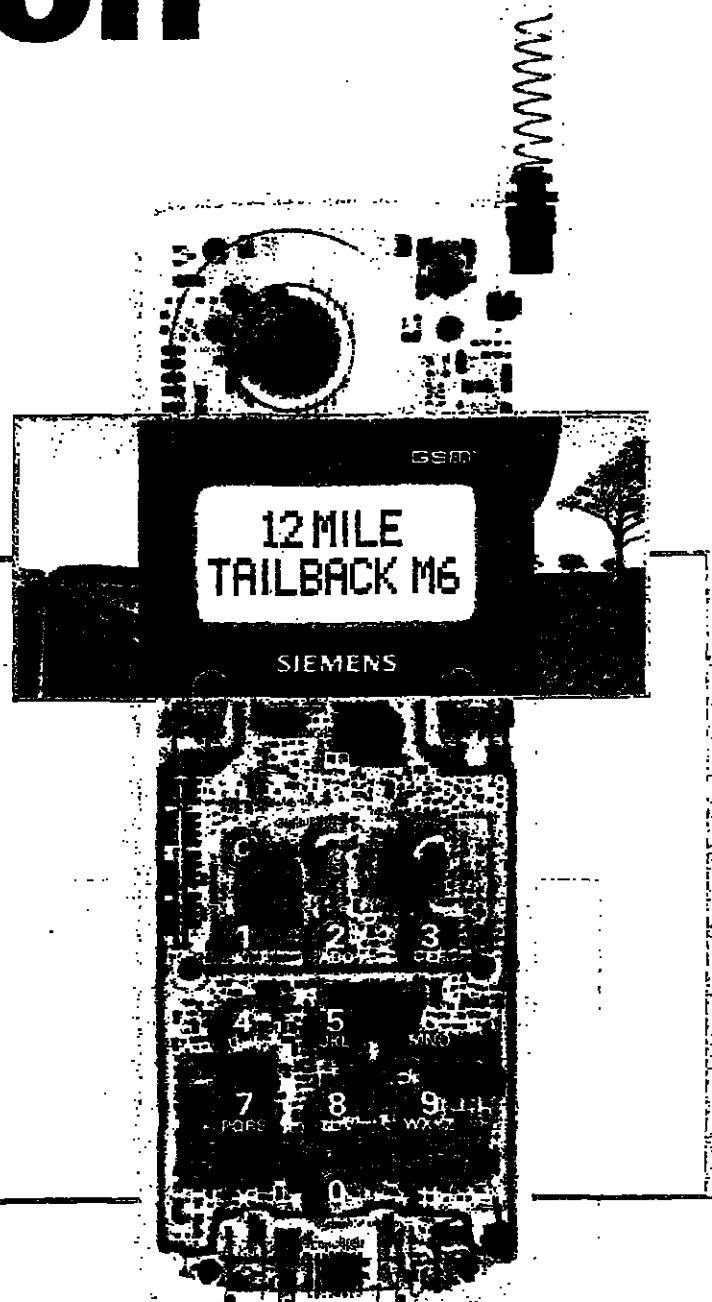
Later this month, the Committee will issue a report on Gulf War illness, which is expected to put great pressure on the Ministry of Defence.

The Committee has also been examining possible compensation schemes for victims.

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# Paedophile had links with child photographer

Fugitive who molested SA youngsters helped at controversial art studio

Steve Beggan

A society children's photographer at the centre of an art-or-pornography debate used a fugitive paedophile as a helper in his studio.

Ron Oliver, whose pictures of children are lauded by the art world but frowned upon by police, used the services of Greg Potter while Mr Potter was on the run from South African police for molesting children and taking pornographic photographs of them.

Mr Oliver said this week that he did not know of Mr Potter's past or of his obsession with children.

"This will do my case no good whatsoever, but I didn't know anything about him," he said. "I didn't employ him full time. I

6 Potter was just someone who ran errands for me ... I had absolutely no idea that he had any record"

just allowed him to run errands."

He said that Mr Potter had never been with him at photographic sessions, although the professional relationship with Mr Oliver will rekindle debate over whether some of Mr Oliver's photographs could excite paedophiles.

Mr Oliver, 37, became a cause célèbre in 1993 when police raided his studio in west London, seized more than 20,000 photographs and arrested him on suspicion of taking indecent pictures of children under 16.

He is an established portrait photographer who specialises in taking pictures, some of them nude, of the children of mainly wealthy professionals.

Advertising in *Vogue* and *Harpers & Queen*, he numbers members of the House of Lords, whom he will not name, among his clients. None of the children's names was published.

A debate raged for months after his arrest over whether his work constituted art or pornography. Art experts praised the beauty and clarity of his images.

He was questioned by police, released on bail and fled to the Netherlands with his family, arguing that if he returned to Britain, the police would harass him. A warrant was issued for his arrest last year on evidence presented to a magistrate, although it is understood that only a handful of pictures out of the thousands seized were considered sensitive enough to put before the magistrate. Aside from that, his case had gone cold.

However, inquiries by *The Independent* have established that Mr Potter, 39, was arrested at Mr Oliver's studio during the initial raid. Mr Potter was questioned by police but released on bail. He too jumped bail. Since then, another warrant has been issued for his arrest on suspicion of sexually assaulting three children in Britain.

While in South Africa, the Zimbabwe-born Mr Potter was wanted by police for allegedly taking pornographic pictures of children and for sexually assaulting them.

He would advertise in magazines for subjects between eight and 13. Themes advertised included "Victorian clothing, water-babies and farmyard fun". By the time he fled in 1989, statements had been taken from 13 children and police were asking for other possible victims to come forward.

Before that, in 1985, he was given a five-year suspended sentence by magistrates in Durban for sexually assaulting nine children who attended his Sunday school classes. After divorcing him, Linda Potter, 37, told one interviewer that she believed he married her only so that he could molest her eight-year-old sister. Mrs Potter's sister said she was sexually abused for four years without Mrs Potter's knowledge.

Childline in Durban said Mr Potter targeted widows and divorcees with children whom he would later molest. In Britain, police believe he used the same methods, befriending single mothers in supermarkets and then sexually assaulting their children. "We consider him to be very dangerous," one officer said.

Speaking from Paris, where he now lives with his wife, Vanessa, and their three children, Mr Oliver said he knew nothing about Mr Potter's past or about the warrant issued for his own arrest last year.

Mr Oliver said he was concerned that Mr Potter's involvement might lead some to find him "guilty by association", but he continues to vehemently protest that he is innocent, and he is still taking photographs of clients' children from all over Europe.

Scores of those who pay about £2,000 for a portfolio of their children have written glowing testimonials, while artistic praise for his images continues to grow.

"Potter was just someone

6 He did not assist me professionally and he never went on any jobs with me to see clients"

who ran errands for me," Mr Oliver said. "He wrote to me saying he was an amateur photographer and asked if he could come and speak to me."

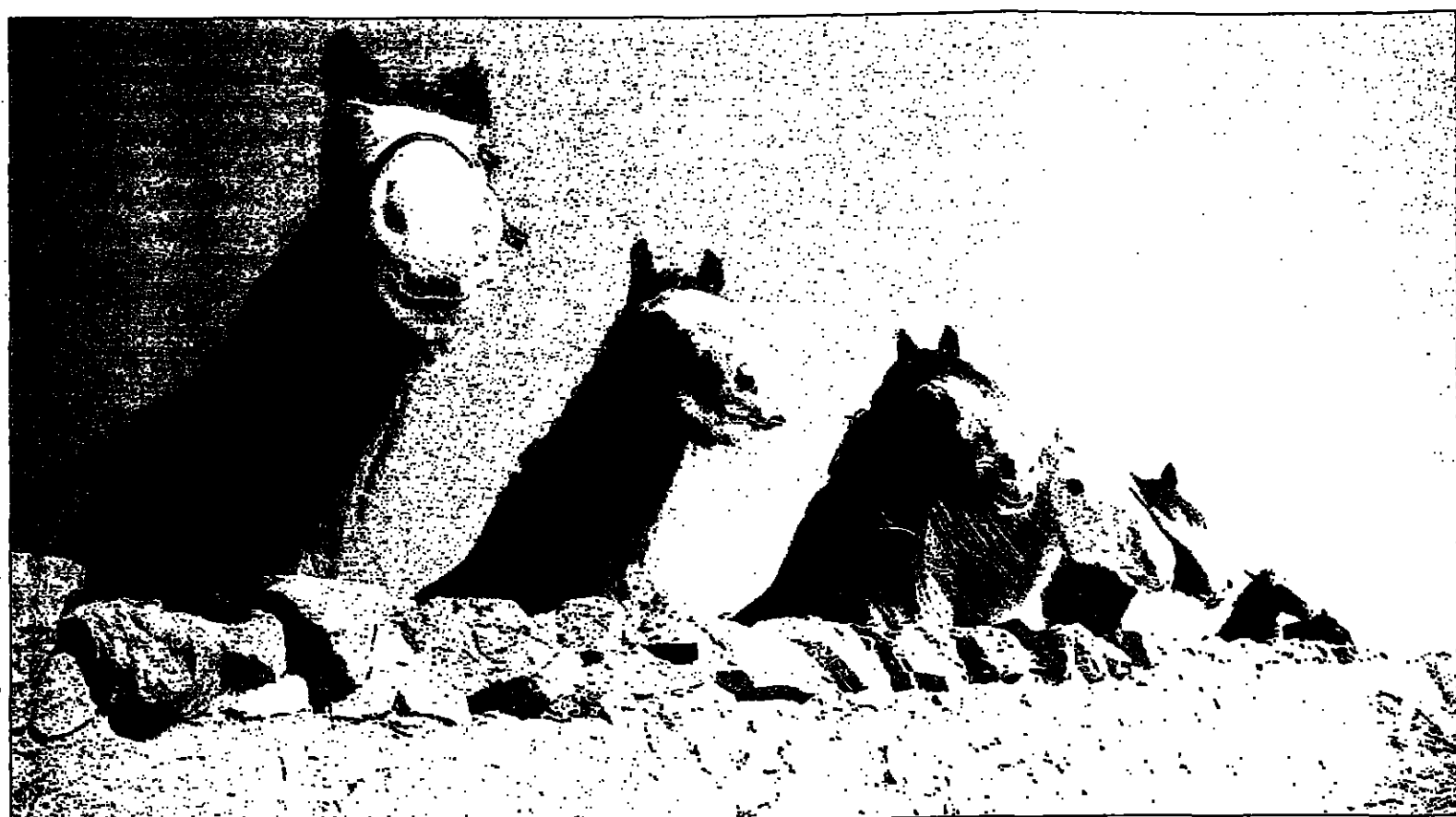
"He wasn't the first person to do that - lots of people, particularly photography students, did. Anyway, he ended up running errands for me, picking up contact sheets and film."

"But he wasn't an assistant or anything like that, and he never went on any jobs with me to see clients. He wasn't a professional, so he didn't assist me professionally. He just did odd jobs and I paid him by the hour."

"I had absolutely no idea that

he had any record. I would be the last person he would tell because he would have known that I'd have had nothing to do with him if he'd told me."

The police said yesterday that they would like to interview Mr Oliver again. However, he said that he was unlikely to come back, because his work would suffer. It appears unlikely that any attempt will be made to extradite him as there is no offence under French law which is similar to that of taking indecent pictures of children under the age of 16.



Losing charity: Clydesdale horses at the Fairways home for retired working horses in Perth. Fifty animals face the knacker's yard because a lack of donations from the public. The reduction in funds has been partly blamed on the National Lottery. Photograph: Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert

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## news

# Rail passengers squeezed by cost cutting

Even more job cuts and a rise in ticket sales would fail to bring companies a profit

Randeep Ramesh

Yet another piece of the nation's train set will trundle into private hands today when Richard Branson's Virgin Group takes over the InterCity West Coast service linking London and Glasgow.

Mr Branson has a vision for the worn out 700 miles of track which carries passengers along the nation's industrial spine. Virgin plans to spend £750m on a fleet of 36 tilting trains and reduce the journey time by 90 minutes to just three-and-a-half hours in six years' time.

Despite record growth in passengers this year, the ride for travellers on the privatised network has become noticeably bumpier. Private owners of train firms have been forced to shelve services because of staff shortages. Others have been fined for cramming passengers



Going nowhere: South West Trains were forced to implement an emergency timetable last month after 70 drivers took redundancy

Photograph: Edward Sykes

into shorter trains and are saving cash by substituting buses for trains on some routes.

Under British Rail things were not much better. Gov-

ernment subsidies shrank and fares rose while stations closed and carriages rusted away. But with privatisation, travellers were supposed to be in for a

"rail renaissance" with train companies becoming "customer-focused."

The problem for passengers is that much has been promised

and very little delivered. The performance of one of the first privatised lines - South West Trains - has been disastrous.

SWT, the biggest commuter

train company in Britain, was taken over by Stagecoach, the bus giant, in February last year. At first the firm comfortably beat its punctuality and rela-

bility targets for trains ferrying passengers between London, Hampshire and Surrey. But in January 70 drivers - more than 10 per cent of the total - took advantage of the firm's severance package - and left.

That led to a shortage of trained staff and eventually cancellations as the company struggled to instruct new drivers. By the end of January, travellers saw an average of 17 services scrapped a day, leaving thousands stranded at stations. Passengers' woes deepened when the company was forced to implement an emergency timetable last month which wiped 39 trains from SWT daily schedules.

Then work on a crucial section of track near Woking in Surrey took more than nine days instead of a weekend to complete, causing chaos to schedules.

The lesson would seem to be not to cut staff, but that is precisely what firms have to do in order to make money. Under the Government's franchising system, firms bid to run train operating companies. The licence was awarded to the firm that

asked for the lowest Government grant or offered the biggest payments over the length of the franchise while meeting minimum standards.

In order to fill the gap between diminishing subsidies and the cost of running a train company, private operators have to increase ticket sales and cut staff numbers. Leaked documents from three franchises in the north of England show that the new owners are preparing to shed 25 per cent of the work force - more than 2,300 staff. Using industry figures for the cost of using the track, renting trains and paying wage bills, it is possible to calculate the job losses needed to make a profit on the new private network. If 10,000 jobs were cut nationally and ticket sales grew by up to 50 per cent over the next seven years, seven train companies would still not be making any money by the time their licences expire.

Prism, a group of bus industry executives who run four train companies - Cardiff Valleys, London Tilbury Southern, West Anglia Great Northern and South Wales and West - will collect more than £300m from the taxpayer over the next seven years. But the company will lose £70m unless it doubles its takings and cuts 900 staff.

Surprisingly, Stagecoach hardly needs to cut staff at all. British Rail used to run South West Trains for a little over £60m a year. Stagecoach will need on average £52m. If staff numbers were to stay the same the company would make £45m over the next six years.

The cost of running British Rail before it was privatised was about £800m a year. The total annual bill for the new privatised system was £1.8bn, which will dwindle to BR levels in seven years' time.

And where did the extra money come from? British Rail, whose sale netted the Treasury £4.5bn. The vast profits and job losses as well as the new carriages - 450 promised next year - will have been paid for by the much-maligned, State-owned BR.

## Public sector deal scraps job demarcation

Barrie Clement  
Labour Editor

Leaders of 1.5 million public service employees will reach a historic agreement today, signalling the end of the notorious "jobsworth" attitude to work among some local authority employees. No longer should council workers reply: "It's more than my job's worth", to a legitimate request to carry out work not stipulated in the time-honoured job sheet.

As part of one of the biggest productivity deals in the history of British industry relations, craftsmen turning up to maintain paths at a school may, for instance, be asked to repair a roof damaged overnight.

Council officials staffing "one-stop shops" will be expected to deal with all requests for help, whichever department is involved: environmental health, housing, or refuse collection.

From 1 April, all demarcation lines will be removed and the only test will be the ability to do the job. From that date, union leaders have given management carte blanche to introduce an unheard-of degree of flexibility in the way that council work is performed.

In return, the agreement, due to be signed today at the Transport and General Workers' Union's headquarters, in central London, will mean that all distinctions between white-

and blue-collar employees will end and everyone will be on a single pay "spine".

The deal will also set in train job evaluation exercises at local authorities, aimed at removing discrimination against women. The studies, undertaken over the next few years, will ensure that work of equal value carries the same reward. Unions will drop thousands of industrial tribunal cases as a result.

Among other management concessions is the introduction of a 37-hour week for blue-collar workers by 1999, and 36 hours in London.

Tied to the radical productivity pact is an annual pay offer of about 2.8 per cent, with additional increases for the lowest paid, effectively giving local authority employees a minimum wage of more than £4. This means council staff will have achieved the TUC bargaining target. It will give them a rate comfortably in excess of any statutory lower minimum which would be introduced by a Labour government.

The accord is an attempt by the three main unions involved, Unison, The Transport & General and the GMB, to enter into a social partnership with the national bodies representing county, district and metropolitan authorities.

Union officials point out that the agreement should give a Labour government two or three years of industrial peace.

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### DAILY POEM

#### At the Last Judgement

by Stephen Tapscott

At the last judgement, when the blind angel  
winds our lives back slowly on her spool.

I will ask her to stop  
for a moment here - it is years since - because

I do not understand, and surely I will need to explain  
how, afterwards, I woke and dressed, leaving her

sleeping, walked out into the orchard and down  
the shining road. For hours the rain had continued,

and now the cold had tightened it, in glares.  
The hawthorn had begun its first extensions. It was April.

I was young, and each pale bud was sealed, intact and perfect,  
in a bullet of ice with a bluish diffidence I recognized.

Stephen Tapscott's volume *From the Book of Changes* (which contains this poem, is his first book to appear in Britain (published by Carcanet, £7.95). He is Professor of English at MIT and the translator of Pablo Neruda's *One Hundred Sonnets*.

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**COMPAQ**

## international

# Trial may untangle Mexican drug links

Phil Davison  
Mexico City

Was the government and family of the former Mexican president, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, in cahoots with the country's drug barons?

Mexicans believe a trial opening in Houston, Texas, today could lift the lid on a Pandora's box tying in the Salinas family and former senior Mexican officials with the drug cartels.

Mario Ruiz Massieu, a deputy attorney-general under Mr Salinas which made him the top man in the anti-narcotics programme, faces a civil trial over \$9m (£5.5m) he amassed in a Houston bank account.

Seeking to confiscate the money, United States prosecutors will try to prove it came from pay-offs by drug lords. Mr Ruiz Massieu says it came from legitimate business transactions and "bonuses" from Mr Salinas.

US law enforcement sources say prosecution witnesses will link Mr Ruiz Massieu and his late brother, Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu, a former secretary-general of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), with the drug lords of the Mexican Gulf cartel.

Witnesses will also name Mr Salinas's brother, Raul, and father, also called Raul, a former senator, as taking massive pay-offs to protect the cartel. There is reportedly no evidence suggesting Carlos Salinas, who lives in exile in Ireland, was involved with drug barons. Raul Salinas Jr and his father deny ties with the narcos.

Mexicans hope the trial may also shed some light on the 1994 assassination of Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu, who was formerly married to a sister of Carlos Salinas. Raul Salinas Jr is in jail awaiting trial for allegedly ordering the killing, now believed to have been linked to the

multi-million dollar drug trade.

Carlos Salinas named Mario Ruiz Massieu to investigate the murder of his brother but Mario is now suspected of tampering with evidence to protect Raul Salinas. The latter also faces trial for inexplicable wealth. Despite receiving only an official salary, Mr Salinas was found to have more than \$100m in more than 70 Swiss, British and other foreign bank accounts. Mexican prosecutors are investigating whether the money came from drug-trafficking.

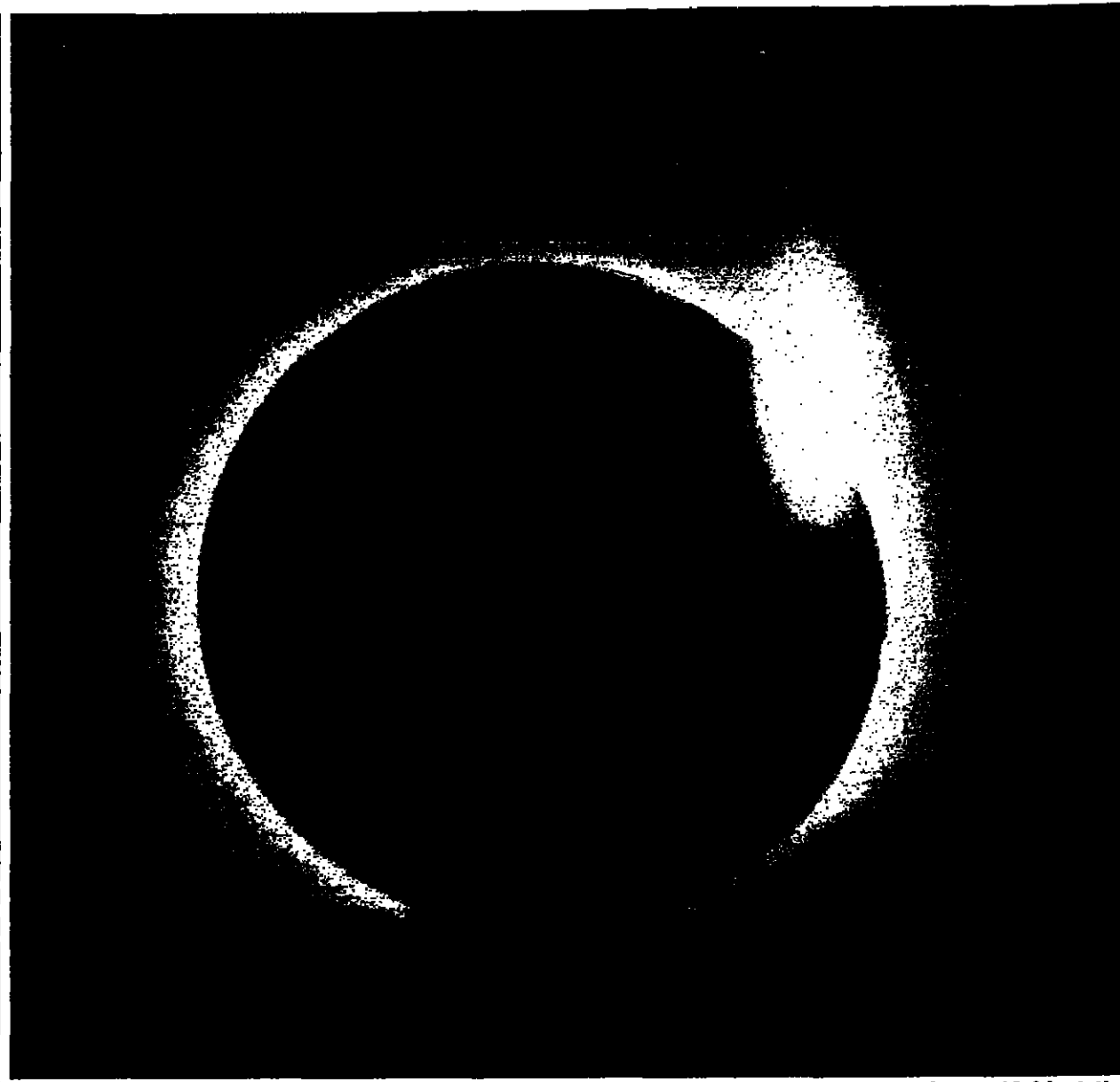
After fleeing Mexico three days after Raul Salinas's arrest, Mario Ruiz Massieu was arrested in Newark, New Jersey, in March 1995 for failing to declare \$46,000 in cash on a customs form. He has been under house arrest in New Jersey since.

The US federal prosecutors say an aide to Mr Massieu, former diplomat Jorge Stergios, carried suitcases full of dollars to Houston from Mexico City twice a month for his boss in 1994, the last year of Carlos Salinas's term. Prosecution documents say the money was in return for protecting Gulf cartel bosses from the law.

In a deposition, Mr Ruiz Massieu said \$500,000 was in bonuses from the Mexican president. Mr Ruiz Massieu said the rest of the \$9m was his savings.

A key witness in Houston could be Magdalena Ruiz Pelayo, currently in a US jail for drug trafficking, who claims to have been a private secretary to Raul Salinas Sr. Ms Ruiz has told prosecutors Mr Salinas Sr was a key figure in the Gulf cartel. He denies the allegation and says he has never heard of Ms Ruiz.

Mexican media reported this month that Carlos Salinas's sister, Adriana, had been given a \$2m mansion in Mexico by Pablo Escobar, then boss of the Medellín drug cartel in Columbia. Ms Salinas denied the reports.



Blackout: The sun disappearing behind the moon in a total solar eclipse, observed yesterday at 10.01 at the Siberian city of Chita, near the border with Mongolia. Photograph: AP

## China linked to US funds scandal

Rupert Cornwell  
Washington

Washington's political fundraising scandal acquired a lurid new dimension yesterday with revelations that the FBI warned several members of Congress they were targets of an illegal \$2m (£1.25m) effort by the Chinese government to buy votes and influence.

According to the *Washington Post*, six Congressional figures were involved, including California's Democratic Senator, Dianne Feinstein. ABC television reported that 30 were "potential targets".

Even before these allegations, the Democratic elder

statesman Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York was speaking of "an attack on our system from Asia, mainland China and perhaps Taiwan. The system was attacked and some of it was penetrated".

The re-emergence of the "China connection" turns the focus back to the gargantuan fundraising efforts of the 1996 Clinton campaign by a clutch of Chinese-Americans, notably the former Commerce Department official John Hoang and two businessmen, Johnny Chung and Charles Lin Tie.

All three, the *Post* said, were being investigated by the FBI as conduits for the Chinese money, laundered to avoid a breach

of US laws barring campaign contributions from foreign individuals and governments.

The episode can only embarrass President Bill Clinton, tarnishing the lustre of last week's press conference when he easily fended off questions over fundraising, including acceptance on the premises by a senior aide of a \$50,000 cheque from Mr Chung.

Mr Clinton insisted no laws had been broken, and that Democratic fundraising was a matter of self-defence against the Republican "juggernaut". The fact remains that Messrs Huang, Tie and Chung visited the White House more than 150 times, which adds to pressure

for a special counsel to probe the whole business. It is now a question less of if than when Janet Reno, the Attorney General, makes that appointment.

Democrats have grudgingly bowed to the Republican majority on Capitol Hill for Senate hearings on the issue, though not on the practice of large "soft money" donations by corporations and party fatcats, which is widely considered the true poison of the system.

The outcome of the future is unpredictable. Mr Clinton's high poll ratings suggest the country is not moved. The frenzy over fundraising may prove to be sound and busy, signifying ultimately very little.

## significant shorts

### Netanyahu battles to maintain coalition unity

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, was yesterday trying to hold his coalition together as the Israeli army prepares to withdraw from another 9 per cent of the West Bank.

Over the next week 200,000 Palestinians in 50 towns and villages will come under the exclusive control of the Palestinian Authority. Eight members of Mr Netanyahu's coalition say they will vote against him on a motion of no-confidence over the withdrawal in the Knesset when he has a majority of 68 out of 120. But the Prime Minister can use the threat of a national unity government to force his rebels to support him.

The Palestinian leadership has condemned the US veto of the UN Security Council resolution calling on Israel not to build at Har Homa in Jerusalem. But Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, will do nothing to alienate the US, on whom he relies to force Israel to implement the Oslo accords under which Israel is supposed to end its West Bank occupation. Patrick Cockburn - Jerusalem

### Military cadets surrender

Two students at a Russian military college who fled after shooting dead five fellow cadets and an instructor gave themselves up to police and troops who tracked them down. One of the two cadets opened fire on colleagues standing guard at Kamyslin Military College near Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad). The pair then fled with sub-machine-guns and ammunition. Reuters - Moscow

### US rapper shot dead

American rapper Notorious B.I.G. was gunned down yesterday, the second well-known gangster rap artist killed in six months. The rapper, whose real name is Christopher Wallace, was leaving a party just after midnight when rounds of gunfire erupted from a passing vehicle. Wallace was dead on arrival at hospital. Reuters - Los Angeles

Obituary, page 16

### Hostage talks resume in Lima

Two mediators in Peru's 82-day hostage crisis entered the Japanese ambassador's residence yesterday in what appeared to be a resumption of indirect contact between the government and Marxist rebels.

Archbishop Juan Luis Cipriani and Canadian ambassador Anthony Vincent are both members of a three-man mediation commission. Reuters - Lima

### Crowds jeer Milosovic

More than 50,000 jeering and flag-waving opponents of Serbian President Slobodan Milosovic rallied in Belgrade in support of more democracy and freedom for the media. The gathering was the first big protest since Mr Milosovic reinstated opposition election victories last month. The demonstration also marked the sixth anniversary of the first street protest against Mr Milosovic on 9 March 1991, when two people died. AP - Belgrade

### Cubans salsa into record book

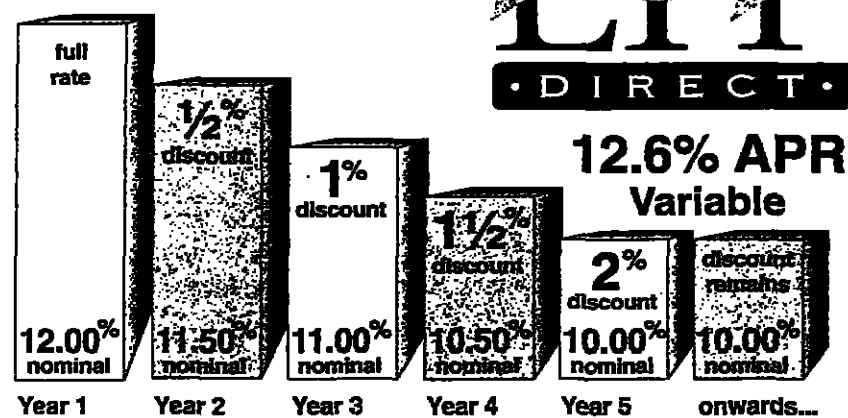
Hundreds of couples packed Havana's Salon Rosado dance theatre as Los Van Van, Cuba's best known salsa band, kicked off what organisers hope will be the world's biggest non-stop salsa concert. The concert began shortly after 10 pm on Saturday night and was set to run continuously until 10 pm on Wednesday. A maximum 10 seconds' silence is allowed between bands. Reuters - Havana

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# China blames 'criminals' for bus bomb

Teresa Poole  
Peking

China yesterday blamed "criminal elements" for the home-made bomb which exploded on a bus in a central shopping district last Friday. The national Chinese media, which often operates a news blackout after such incidents, did not report the explosion, but Peking television and radio news and the capital's newspapers carried brief details, calling on citizens to be vigilant and offering a large reward for information helpful to the police.

Official reports said the bomb was planted between the third and fourth

row of seats in the bus but that no-one was killed. However, sources contacted by Reuters said two people died, and 30 were injured.

The semi-official China News Service quoted the Peking Mayor, Jia Qingling, as saying another smaller bomb went off earlier last week elsewhere in the Chinese capital, but that no-one was hurt in that incident. Rumours had already circulated in Peking of a bus bomb last Thursday.

Exiled Uighur separatists claimed responsibility for Friday's bomb, and vowed to stage more attacks until they had gained "complete freedom" for China's western region of Xinjiang. The blast in Peking came

just 10 days after three bus bombs in Urumqi, the provincial capital of Xinjiang. The Urumqi bombs, which killed nine people and injured 74, went off on the day of the memorial ceremony for Deng Xiaoping, and Friday's bomb on a Number 22 bus in the Xidan shopping street coincided with this year's meeting of China's parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC).

Known terrorist attacks are rare in China, and while the country is governed by an often brutal authoritarian regime it is one which has little experience in the sort of security measures needed to guard against indiscriminate bombings.

With the profitable tourist season just under way in China, the authorities are anxious to halt any more incidents, particularly outside Xinjiang. By yesterday, security in Peking was visibly tighter especially in department stores and at the railway station, with large numbers of security guards and policemen deployed.

Taxi drivers said that their work units had told them to be wary of Uighur and Tibetan passengers, and not to touch any parcels left in their cars.

The danger is that a heavy-handed response by the Chinese will alienate public opinion ever more in Xinjiang, encouraging support for separatist activity which until now has

seemed to be the work of uncoordinated Uighur groups, possibly backed by Uighur separatists based in neighbouring Kazakhstan.

Last April, for instance, a wave of arrests reportedly netted 1,700 Uighurs in Xinjiang, further infuriating an ethnic group which accuses Peking of flooding Han Chinese into its province, and exploiting Xinjiang's oil resources for the rest of China's benefit.

Xinjiang is home to China's biggest concentration of Muslims - mostly Uighurs, but also Kazaks, Kirghis and Hui - and for decades Peking has been unable to quell outbursts of violent separatist activity.

Until now, however, these attacks have only taken place inside Xinjiang. In May 1995, five Muslims were executed for their part in 1992 bombings, two of which took place on Xinjiang buses. In May last year, nine alleged separatists were killed in a shoot-out in Kuga city and, separately, a pro-Peking Muslim leader was assassinated.

In the West, the anti-Chinese movement in Xinjiang is much less well-known than the Tibetan people's struggle against Han Chinese domination, because the Uighurs have no exiled leader figure like Tibet's Dalai Lama.

So far, the Chinese government's response to the recent upsurge in terrorism shows no appreciation of the fact that bombing public buses may have little widespread public support even among those resisting Han domination. Both Xinjiang and Tibet are now likely to face a "crack-down" in which innocent people will also be rounded up, increasing ethnic tensions still further.

Last week, Chinese officials at the NPC announced plans for harsher penalties for any terrorist crime. The proposed changes to the criminal law would add up to 10 years in prison to any sentence for bombing or kidnapping which was deemed a terrorist act.

## Peace breaks out in battle for the soul of Auschwitz

Oswiecim — What do you do if you grow up with a view of the Auschwitz watchtowers from your bedroom window? As a child, Andrzej Ozarnik's response was to shudder — then to call his mates to see if they wanted to come and play football in the nearby fields leading up to the death camp gates.

"We are all acutely aware that there was a terrible crime committed here, but we can't spend our whole lives dwelling on that," said Mr Ozarnik, now in his forties. "In the end, we just want to be normal people."

And yet, nothing much in this small chemical-producing Polish town of just 50,000 inhabitants has ever really been normal following its selection by the Nazis to be the largest and most notorious killing site of the Holocaust.

The desire of locals to get on with something resembling normal lives in the town which the world still knows as Auschwitz has been a constant source of irritation to international Jewish groups, who accuse them of showing disrespect to the memory of the some 1.5 million people — primarily Jews — who perished here.

In recent years, there have been several controversies over the Auschwitz legacy. There was fury when a group of Carmelite nuns sought to establish a convent within the actual site of Auschwitz. And tensions erupted again last year when a local developer announced plans to build a shopping complex just across the road from the infamous *Arbeit Macht Frei* slogan at the gateway to the camp. Worldwide protests prompted the Polish government to step in and block the proposed development.

And in a bid to ensure that nothing like it ever happens again, the government and international Jewish groups have now finally agreed a \$40m (£25m) scheme aimed at improving conservation work at the camp while simultaneously helping the adjacent town of Oswiecim to develop.

"We are trying to lay the groundwork for the physical, geographical and spiritual integrity of this unique site in a way that will preserve it for generations and avoid the periodic controversies which end up

Adrian Bridge reports on a £25m deal to respect the camp's legacy

dividing us all," said David Harris, the executive director of the American Jewish Committee after the signing ceremony in Warsaw last week.

Jerzy Wroblewski, the director of the Auschwitz museum, echoes his sentiments. "This agreement can only ease frictions and enable the town and museum to co-exist," he said.

"A lot of people have been

For locals, the presence of the camps is like living with a permanent illness

consulted about it. The last thing we Poles want is to be accused of doing it all wrong again."

The agreed plan envisages extensive conservation work at the twin sites of Auschwitz and neighbouring Birkenau (where the gas chambers were located) and the construction of a common entrance to the two which will be reachable via a new ring road aimed at diverting traffic away from the centre of town.

The plan also foresees a stricter implementation of a

UNESCO-decreed protection zone under which no commercial development will be possible within 500 metres of the two main sites. There is talk of constructing a new conference and discussion centre in the town of Oswiecim.

After decades of criticism about the alleged attempts to Christianise and commercialise the legacy of Auschwitz, the government is keen for this new initiative to be seen as marking a fresh start and as part of an ongoing drive to improve relations with Jewish groups worldwide.

But in Oswiecim itself, where locals resent suggestions that they were complicit in the horrors committed on their doorstep, the scheme has met a sceptical response.

Andrzej Telka, the town's mayor, reflects ruefully on the fact that he and his colleagues had drawn up a more extensive programme (at more than double the cost) under which his run-down town would have received a much-needed facelift.

Mr Telka's scepticism is shared in town. "Of course we welcome any improvements here, but this is not really going to make things much better for us," said local businessman Mirosława Nykiel. "In the end, though, no amount of money can ever solve our problem. For all of us in Oswiecim, the presence of the camps is like living with a permanent illness."



Gateway to Hell: The entrance to Auschwitz. Last year, a developer submitted plans for a shopping centre nearby

## Kohl's wise man calls for Emu to be delayed

Inre Karacs  
Bonn

The German government's continued insistence that European monetary union will begin on schedule was rudely shattered at the weekend by its own top economic adviser, who broke the consensus by calling for the postponement of the project.

Herbert Hax, head of the "five wise men" who provide the government with independent advice, said Germany was on course for busting the two most important Maastricht criteria, and should therefore consider delaying the introduction of the single currency beyond its

launch date of January 1999. "The truth is quite simple: stability comes before the timetable," Mr Hax told the *Bild am Sonntag* newspaper. The government, he explained, would probably exceed the 3 per cent limit set for the budget deficit, and the 60 per cent ceiling for total public debt.

Although the Finance Minister, Theo Waigel, insists that his goal of a 2.9 per cent budget deficit this year is still attainable, no mainstream research institute shares his confidence. The top banks and economic think-tanks estimate that the deficit will stand at between 3.3 and 3.5 per cent.

"The government forecast is 2.9 per cent, but there are others who predict more than 3 per cent," Mr Hax told the newspaper. "If you take the stability criteria seriously, Germany will probably not be able to introduce the euro as planned in 1999."

Bonn's economic woes, aggravated by soaring joblessness, present the EU with a stark choice. "Either you loosen the criteria, and you have to say so now, or Germany will have to get ready for the euro later," Mr Hax said. "Unfortunately, the politicians have turned the

possibility of a delay into a taboo."

The latter was again in evidence this weekend, with Chancellor Helmut Kohl pledging in a speech to "stick to both the agreed start date and the convergence criteria". That position, Mr Hax believes, is unwise.

"Germany and a group of other countries will probably not fulfil the convergence criteria before 1998," he said. "Only after that can the euro be introduced in all these countries."

That would mean, the newspaper retorted, that the euro would be launched in 2000. "That would be better than if four or five countries were to march ahead," Mr Hax declared.

His verdict is likely to invigorate the debate about Emu, which until now has barely touched German society.

With government politicians lining up behind Mr Kohl, and the opposition fearful of appearing irresponsible, calls for postponement have been monopolised by a regional Social Democrat leader, Gerhard Schröder. But last week the country's biggest trade union federation hinted that it might turn against the euro, and now cracks are beginning to appear everywhere.



Male bonding: Russian men during an affresco drinking session. International Women's Day has not changed men's habits. Photograph: Rex Features

## Women have their day, men drink to it

What, I wondered, was more upsetting to the old lady? The fact that her husband, the victim of at least one heart attack, was legless, in defiance of a doctor's ban against vodka?

Or the fact that he had achieved this condition, before the sun had cleared the treetops, on her special day, her *prazdnik* — or holiday?

As we stood chatting outside her home, little in her manner offered any clue; this was a situation with which she, and millions of other Russian women, are so familiar that they have lost the capacity for outrage.

"Vladimir's not around today. He's just sitting inside, drinking," she explained, with a shrug. All the same, you could see she was unhappy. The day was proving no fun at all.

International Women's Day, celebrated on Saturday, is supposed to honour women. In Russia, however, it frequently achieves the opposite, propelling the country into spring with a hot gust of alcohol-fueled chauvinism.

Behaviour that would earn a man a smacking cheek in London, or a lawsuit in New York, is considered no more offensive

### MOSCOW DAYS

than a handshake. The sexes are locked in an arcane waltz between the clumsy and the coy, the predatory and the prim, the meditation and the micro-skirt.

The arrival of advertising and the mass media, which have shown little restraint in bombarding Russia's new consumers with sexual imagery, have only made matters worse.

Women's day reinforces this, providing an unwelcome reminder that chivalry is — alas, for women — not dead. Many men simply get drunk. But those who do not are expected to become one-day Don Quixotes, lavishing patronage on women whose labours they often ignore for the rest of the year.

"We do all the cooking and all the housework," said my friend, Oleg, when I called him to find out more. "Flowers are compulsory, for all the women in the household." (That explains why there are lines of men gathered at the stalls of Moscow on Saturday morning, paying up to \$6 (£3.50) for a bouquet.) But then he came clean.

Weren't there a lot of men in Russia (and, elsewhere, for that matter) whom it was hard to imagine cooking and cleaning, I asked? "You know, we Russian gentlemen are great actors," he replied. "We make a big performance of it. The truth is that most of the preparations have been done by the women in the days beforehand."

I was glad I'd asked. For this explained what I saw on Saturday, driving out of Moscow for a day in the country. It was well above freezing, so warm that the whole landscape seemed to be

dripping. Yet, roosting quietly on a lake was an army of men, hunched over small holes in the ice in the hope of catching fish.

Such behaviour jars with another Russian holiday, which this year coincided with women's day. Last week was *Maslennitsa* week, a 1,500-year-old feast held between two fasts — one that follows Orthodox Christmas and the onset of Lent.

Although the festival was banned by the Communists, it never entirely died and is now returning to popularity. It is a time of gluttony, in which Russians consume so many *blini* (pancakes) and so much vodka there have sometimes been fatalities. But it also has strong pa-

gan roots in fertility rites marking the end of winter. In times past, it was Russia's version of the Mardi Gras, a riot of games, trials of strength, drinking bouts and erotic dances. A large straw doll would be burnt and its ashes spread around the fields to make the crops grow. Male elders would strip naked, and perform lurid dances before their fellow villagers.

Many of the traditions have died out. More's the shame. Given the male boozing and fishing on Women's Day, and Russia's fast-falling population, the country needs all the help that it can get.

Phil Reeves

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## arts

## Long in the tooth

## DANCE

Royal Ballet:  
Dance Bites  
High Wycombe

The Royal Ballet cannot afford to tour large-scale productions to the provinces so, in order to make it up to them, it undertakes small-scale tours in the form of Dance Bites, which seeks to provide a platform for young choreographers. The tour also provides an opportunity for the Royal Ballet's enterprising Education department to work with young people from the towns visited, and the result of these workshops is presented at the matinee performances.

It is hugely helpful for young choreographers to stage their work away from the gilded glare of Covent Garden but, on the evidence of the past couple of years, these worthy aims do not seem to combine terribly well with the company's paramount duty: to entertain. Key company names are missing from the Dance Bites squad. No Guillem (as if), no Mukhamedov and, on Friday night in High Wycombe, even Darcey Bussell and Tetsuya Kumakawa were on the subs bench. The only big names on show were Jonathan Cope and Adam Cooper and, if the old clapperboard was any guide, High Wycombe was unconscious of their fame.

The work they were given to perform was unlikely to establish them in anyone's memory. The current Dance Bites programme comprises five new works plus a revival of Christopher Wheeldon's *Private Passion* (the *Infante Defunte* and *Ebony Concerto* by the seasoned choreographer Ashley Page, Cathy Marston's *Figure in Progress* was inspired by the work of Giacometti and danced to Shostakovich preludes and fugues punctuated by Fabienne Audouard's samplings from the same pieces. Matthew Hart's *Cry Baby* Kreisler began with Jonathan Cope emoting histrionically at the keyboard of a grand piano. Moments later, Sarah Wilder climbs out of the instrument in a spectacularly unflattering knitted black catsuit and the couple perform a comedy duet of gauche lifts and unlikely poses before tucking themselves up into the piano using the lid as a bedspread. Ashley Page's *Room of Cooks* returns to the fertile territory explored in last year's *Sleeping With Audrey*. Both works take Stephen Chambers' paintings as their starting point and both use jazzy minimalist scores by Orlando Gough. *Room of Cooks* features a table, two men, a woman and a meat cleaver. Scenes of love and violence are punctuated by flashes of darkness, and the action forms a continuous, intriguing loop of motive, method and opportunity. One wonders which paintings Page will animate for us next: *Dejeuner sur l'herbe* perhaps? Or *When Did You Last See Your Father*? The evening's least successful pieces were Tom Sapsford's clubland drama *All Nighter* and William Tuckett's impenetrable quartet *The Magic's Tower*. It seems rather a pity that Adam Cooper's farewell performances with the Royal Ballet should be made in an ill-fitting white tennis dress and red bonnet.

If the Royal Ballet persists in such a low-key touring programme there is a very real danger that the nation's taxpayers will wonder what all the fuss is about. Without any sexy new work it would make sense to part up the programme with a few crowd pleasing *pas de deux* from the current London season – piano accompaniment wouldn't be the end of the world. The bland fodder on offer this year needs a lot more sugar on it to make it palatable. Theatre Royal, Bath, Mon and Tues (01225 448844)

Louise Levene



Zenaide Yanowsky dances Cathy Marston's 'Figure in Progress' Photograph: Laurie Lewis

# The man who invented Jack Nicholson

Director Bob Rafelson saw Nicholson's potential as an actor back in the Sixties, and the resulting collaboration has endured for 30 years. It continues with the release of 'Blood and Wine'. Where next? By Nick Hasted

Bob Rafelson bears down on you in the middle of a sentence. Almost bulbous eyes peer at you closely, his body bears yours like a challenge. Then he's off, stalking to the hotel balcony, seeking relief in the cold morning air. He veers between barely suppressed boredom and sudden interrogation of his questioner, ranging round his room as if caged, anything to keep things off-balance, to shake up the tedium, to release the emotion that the need to promote his new film *Blood and Wine* is suppressing. Now 63, he's a director of legendary spikiness and talent. Meet him, and it's easy to credit the tales of his stormy confrontations with industry powers: overturning Universal mogul Lew Wasserman's desk, turning on a studio spy on the set of the Robert Redford vehicle *Brubaker* in 1980 in a white-hot fury (a confrontation that allowed the studio to sack him, and hurt his career).

It's easy, too, to imagine him bulling round sets, bringing his early classics to life: *Head* (1968), *Five Easy Pieces* (1971), *The King of Marvin Gardens* (1973) and *Stay Hungry* (1976), unpredictable films about quests for meaning in odd corners of the States. When not directing, he was producing, using the profits from *The Monkees*, which he created, to back *Easy Rider* and give a home to the talents its unexpected success let run riot in a reeling Hollywood – Dennis Hopper, Jack Nicholson, Peter Bogdanovich, the whole counter-culture crew.

Nicholson, alone, is still with him. They met in the Sixties. It was Nicholson who wrote *Head*, Rafelson's deconstruction of *The Monkees*. It was Rafelson who convinced Nicholson that his acting had a future. In the heat of that first, drug-fuelled collaboration, they talked about making more films together, a joint, lifetime biography. *Five Easy Pieces*, *The King of Marvin Gardens*, *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1981) and *Man Trouble* (1992) followed, a partnership continued in this week's *Blood and Wine*. It's a collaboration almost equal to Scorsese's with De Niro. Rafelson is reluctant to focus on it; he'd like to slide away from its importance. But he can't. For 30 years, Rafelson and Nicholson have been bonded like brothers.

It's a bond that was sealed early on. *Five Easy Pieces* cast Nicholson as a middle-class drifter. *The King of Marvin Gardens*, which followed, made him a late-night DJ. Both films were close to Rafelson's own life. In the Fifties he had drifted round the world, and talked into the night as a DJ in Japan. But looked at now, *Five Easy Pieces*, at least, is also striking for its anti-hero's closeness to what would become Nicholson's own classic persona. He's too bright for the people around him, sexual, his grin a distraction from the anger in his eyes. If this was a shared biography, who was who when the two began? Was Rafelson at the root of the Nicholson we've come to know?

"Don't confuse entirely the part and the actor playing the part," Rafelson cuts in. "You see Jack Nicholson in a role, and 30 years later you see him in a role, and by now this routine of his has become so familiar that you wonder whether he can act or not. Because you've seen it all. So Jack is charming and Jack does have those eyebrows, and there was that kind of sexuality in the piece, and yeah, that's true of Jack. But it's probably true of the director of the film, and somewhat true of the producer of the film. Of all the movies he's made in his life, *The King of Marvin Gardens* is the one that's furthest away from his character. He's an unsmiling, charming, uptight nerd."

But Rafelson has talked about Nicholson as his alter ego. Is it more complex



Rafelson and Nicholson on the set of their latest film, 'Blood and Wine' (top); the culmination of a 30-year working relationship that has included 'Five Easy Pieces' (1971); 'The King of Marvin Gardens' (1973); 'The Postman Always Rings Twice' (1981) (above, from left) Photos courtesy Kobal

than that? Does he reject the term? "Nicholson plays in a lot of movies where I'm trying to figure out certain things," Rafelson sighs, impatient. "But they're pretty universal things. I don't take pride in the fact that it's my life story that Jack is playing. I don't think of it that way. Not at all. It's never discussed between us when we work. We might talk about his life, for a fraction, for a moment, which he would consider very, very unfair. Jack has enough to do relating to his daughter, and to life and fiction and everything else. He doesn't need me to base a performance on."

After *Marvin Gardens*, the relationship with Nicholson loosened. The actor's career had gone into orbit by the end of the Seventies, moving him away from his low-budget roots. Rafelson continued on

his own, drifting again, taking years to research projects in far corners of the world. His life had become something that his films couldn't really contain, and which Hollywood didn't want. The next decade held few highlights. *Mountains of the Moon* (1988), about a Victorian explorer, fused his own travelling with a veiled assault on his Hollywood enemies, but few saw it. Even a film with Nicholson, *Man Trouble*, was a botched job, disowned. His career seemed to be grinding to a halt. He did have one idea he'd been picking at. He had talked about it with Nicholson. But he knew the film would be dark, low-budget, too low to pay his friend. Until Nicholson saw the script, and insisted. The collaboration would continue after all.

*Blood and Wine* is the result, a return

to form for them both. Nicholson plays a worn-down man who is tempted into crime. Attempting to retrieve a stolen necklace, he abandons his wife, his step son, his morals. He stalks through the film like a storm-cloud, needing to blow something apart. "It is about someone who descends into evil," Rafelson concedes. Nicholson reaches his nadir searching a crashed car in which his wife and step son have been trapped, fingering his wife's bloody panties as he hunts for the necklace, ripped between disgust and desire. "Best scene in the movie," Rafelson says, delighted. It goes further than most audiences would expect these days. "Fuck 'em. What do you want from me? If I'm not going to take you as far as you can go I don't want to take the bus that way. I wish I

could go further. I wish I had the talent to go further."

It's praiseworthy that Nicholson, at this stage in his career, should still want to go with him. Do they intend to continue their collaboration? Will it really be the lifetime project they dreamed of? "He's a good pain in the ass, and this is the last one," Rafelson deadpans. "Fuck him. I'll go out and find somebody else to direct. He's not gonna do no grandpa story with me. I'll tell ya that."

*Blood and Wine* does feel like the end of something, for all Rafelson's tough talk. Its final shot is of the edge of America. It feels like a terminal film.

"I think it probably is," Rafelson says, not bothered. He considers for a moment. "Terminal. I like the sound of that."

## THEATRE

The Mysteries  
RSC, Stratford;  
Unicorn, London

Katie Mitchell's beautiful production of *The Mysteries* ends with the last occasion on which the apostles meet and share a meal with the risen Christ. Before leaving, Paul Hilton's superlative Jesus kisses each of them full on the mouth and, as he walks away, says: "Follow me." Both poignantly and stirringly, Mitchell's staging shows how the meaning of that injunction has now shifted and deepened. Instead of trooping off after Christ, as they have done before, the silent apostles gradually get up and, each shouldering responsibility for spreading the word, strike out in different directions.

It's significant that this version of *The Mysteries* should climax on earth with a pensive and inaugural moment for mankind rather than down in hell with the fulfilment of God's forethought on Judgement Day. Made up from bits of all the medieval cycles and from scripture, Edward Kemp's two-play script – *The Crucifixion* and *The Passion* – arranges and inflects the various stories so as to replace the heaven/hell scenario of the original with the theme of a return to paradise through human beings taking responsibility for themselves. You'll wait in vain, here, for the fall of Lucifer or for a smug chairman's report from God at the close of business.

Kemp is a man prepared to characterize even the Gospels as "fraught with ideologically unsavoury baggage" and some of his

introductory remarks make you fear that political correctness will lie like a pall over the proceedings. In fact, staged with a lovely, elemental sparseness and charged simplicity, and performed by a manifestly dedicated company, the two productions move, engross and delight throughout.

Happily, the devisors haven't dropped the idea of a deity. But from the moment when, in pitch darkness, we hear a groan turn into a chuckle and then into the whispering repeated, nursery rhyme-like chant of "let there be light", you get the sense that David Ryall's God – a rum old party, like some benignly bemused ex-member of the Crazy Gang – is making things up as he goes along. After the fall, he offers mankind the hope of re-entering paradise in promising them the Oil of Mercy. Thanks to the inclusion here of the not-so-well-known story of Seth (the son of Adam who travels to the gates of Eden to quiz the Angel of Justice), a recurring and growing symbol of that hope, hung with ever

more petitions, is the tree that sprouts and is replanted from the seeds Seth is instructed to place in the mouth of his dead father.

A more familiar take on *The Mysteries* can be seen now in Richard Williams' likeable production for children at the Unicorn. Driven forward by feistily sung and harmonised spirituals and gospel numbers, the show appealed very much to my nine-year-old assistant but was an odd experience for me, coming to it the day after seeing the Mitchell. Take the treatment of Judas. If somebody had to betray Jesus, wasn't Judas in a way doing him a favour, my daughter wondered, after seeing him presented as the conventional malcontent in the Williams. She should have come to the Mitchell for there, so loth are they to demonise anyone, Jesus treats Declan Conlon's pained, dignified Judas as almost a loving co-conspirator, returning with fervour the kiss of betrayal.

Given to standing on his head when alone, Paul Hilton's Christ is a wonderful mix of a boyishness not yet outgrown and a precocious, piercing paternal solicitude for his followers. His is the first Jesus I've ever heard making "yum, yum" noises before symbolic meals and the first whose love for mankind has seemed so winningly unmetaphysical. RSC, *The Other Place* (01789 295623); the Unicorn, to 13 April (0171-836 3334)

Paul Taylor

Saturday's Rostropovich Seventieth Birthday celebration was rich in musical allusions – Leonard Bernstein to Prokofiev, Prokofiev to his great classical forebears and Shostakovich to his own noted signature. The concert opened with Bernstein's uproarious Rostropovich tribute, the *Overture for Orchestra: Slava!*, Slava – or "glory" – being Rostropovich's nickname. *Slava!* borrows from a little-known Bernstein musical and runs the gamut of Lenny-style gestures, from *Candide* and "Officer Krupke" to *Fancy Free*. However, the real surprise arrives during a "development" section where rapturous voices lobby for attention over an upbeat rhythmic accompaniment, alluding unmistakably to a parallel passage in Prokofiev's rowdy *October Revolution* Cantata. The score climaxes to hearty shouts of "Slava!" that sounded like an orderly stage riot. The LSO's performance bristled with life, whereas Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony*, although

## CLASSICAL MUSIC LSO / Rostropovich Barbican, London

nice, pointed, was more weighty than witty. Here the "classical" axis was presented "à la Karajan" rather than "à la Harmoncourt", with broadly drawn cellos answering perky violins and bassoons in the first movement, a dreamy Larghetto, a lovingly overstated Gavotte and a spruce finale. Rostropovich attended to every detail of the score, punching out accents, raising a crescendo with his left hand, then lowering his arm gradually for a scrupulously tailored diminuendo. This was no mere pastiche, but a real First Symphony, albeit one that's tinged with irony.

However, the highlight of the evening was yet to come and I doubt that anyone present had ever heard a finer concert performance of Shosta-

kovich's Tenth Symphony, at least not in the past 20 years. The opening bars said it all, with cellos and basses stalking capably by first violins and violas. It was very much an "edge of the seat" job, tensed in body and breath, stealthy, ominous and beautifully shaped. And when those long, searing climaxes arrived three-quarters through the first movement, few conductors could have summoned a more forceful welter of sound. The "Stalin" Scherzo prompted rocketing dynamics and a volley of percussion loud enough to rouse the dead. The effect was truly terrifying, while the Allegretto's waltz-time variation on Shostakovich's noted signature (based on an abbreviation of the Germanised "D.SCHosta-

kowitch") sounded, in Rostropovich's hands, like a macabre Russian dance.

But perhaps the most memorable moment of all, came near the beginning of the finale, where woodwinds attempt to break the mood, only to be rebuffed by glowering responses. Shostakovich eventually lets the woodwinds win, though the *dénouement* comes later on when "Stalin" returns and the composer tops him with an explosive statement of the "D.SCH" motive. Rostropovich rose to the moment as if defending a loved one in battle; it was sweet vengeance, a tribute within a tribute, and a glorious affirmation of musical freedom. Suddenly, I tried to imagine what it must have been like to play this loaded score under an oppressive regime – knowing that, although one tyrant was gone, the job was still only half done. Such is the suggestive power of great music, and the persuasive force of a great performance.

Robert Cowan

Tomorrow in the Tabloid: Tom Lubbock on Goya. Plus Network+, the computer and IT section

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## the leader page

## A shadowy way to fund Labour's Big Three

There are three ways of giving money to a political party. Two of them are legitimate and one is not – a Labour official, commenting on yesterday's report of the millionaires who are bankrolling Tony Blair's Shadow Cabinet. The three options are: (a) Both the recipient and the public could know who has given the money; (b) Neither the recipient nor the public know, in which case the politician cannot theoretically be influenced by the donation; (c) The recipient knows but the public does not, which is what the Conservatives do.

Now, it is absolutely true that the funding methods of the modern Tory party are indefensible and undemocratic. It is true that yesterday's *Sunday Times* report of the "secretive fund" that pays the meagre salaries of researchers for Robin Cook, David Blunkett, Jack Straw and others was self-rebutting, in that it was based – if you persevered to paragraph 16 – on information openly and willingly provided by the Labour Party about the source of this money. But it is also true that the Labour leader's arrangements for a "blind trust" to pay for his unprecedentedly large private office are unsatisfactory.

The blind trust was set up along the lines of options (b). The identity of its donors is known only to the fund's three trustees, who are charged with ensuring that they are neither criminals

nor foreigners and then passing the money on. The trust was approved by Sir Gordon Downey, Parliament's ethics watchdog, as a way to avoid the perception that people who helped to finance Mr Blair's office wanted to buy influence. Sir Gordon may now regret his decision, which he is currently re-examining. On the narrow point of avoiding influence-peddling, the device is fine. But it fails to convince when viewed as part of the broader picture.

The Labour Party has made great play of its openness about the source of its money. As well as affiliation fees from trade unions, it now publishes the names of donors giving more than £5,000 in any one year. And it has contrasted this with the absolute secrecy of the Tory accounts.

"It is a disgrace that in a democracy a political party can hide the sources of its funding from the public," said John Prescott last year, once again performing the valuable service of speaking plainly. But it undermines his claim to be "Honest John", and Labour's claim to the moral high ground, that Mr Blair, Mr Prescott and Mr Brown should all have blind trusts that hide the sources of their funding – even if they are also hidden from Labour's Big Three themselves. And who is to say there will not be nods and winks as to the source of the money?

The real problem for Labour is that there may well be two different ways of

accepting political donations which are both better than the Tory way, but is one not better than the other? What is wrong with complete openness as a guiding principle throughout? Why should the Labour leader and his top brass have private funds at all? It is, at the very least, confusing that there should be separate funds for the top three operating under one set of rules, and a fund for the rest of the Shadow Cabinet apart from the Labour Party itself, both of which operate under the rules of full disclosure.

The problem is not simply one of who gives the money, but who spends it.



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Blair – reportedly £2m – are substantial and are spent at his discretion. His office, consisting of more than 20 staff, is much bigger than any of his predecessors' and much more powerful in relation to the party machine. But not only does Mr Blair's trust not disclose the sources of its money, it does not publish accounts of where that money goes.

Clearly, many business leaders in particular are much happier parting with their money if it goes to funds controlled by Mr Blair himself than if it ends up in the Labour Party's general account at the Co-op, for which the National Executive must sign the cheques. But this does raise broader issues of policy, and of Mr Blair's relationship with the corporate Establishment.

If, as we report today, BT's chairman, Iain Vallance, is about to be awarded a £500,000 bonus, what is a Labour prime-minister-in-waiting going to say or do about it? Labour is against fat-cat bosses of privatised utilities, except when they give Mr Blair a big governmental announcement to make at his party conference. And except when it comes to doing anything about them.

It is unfair, of course, to criticise Labour when the position of the Prime Minister and the Conservative Party is so much worse. Mr Blair, after all, is not about to start selling peerages, although Gordon Brown may want to consider the idea as a way of producing revenue from democratic reform.

But it is safe to say, without prejudice to our political independence, that the likelihood that Mr Blair might be prime minister in eight weeks' time is strong. The ethical standards of his proto-administration must be examined on their own merits, not just in comparison to what has gone before. The fact that Mr Major's house is so disorderly does not excuse Mr Blair from less serious infractions.

## Fakes will teach them a lesson

Another snag the zealots did not think of: voucher forgery. Now the Government has added another task to the brief list of duties teachers have to discharge during their short and relaxed working hours. As well as translating the national curriculum into English, reading important DfEE circulars and occasionally fitting in a little light teaching, they now have to test nursery vouchers to make sure they are genuine. Of course, this procedure has high educational value. By playing at shopkeepers they can introduce some "early years" concepts and discuss with their classes questions such as: Why do the words "nursery education" turn white if you rub them? And: Will this scheme win any votes at all at the election?

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Caesareans: doctors owe duty to child

Sir: Barbara Hewson does her case no favours by presenting it in extreme terms ("Freedom tips over the door", 5 March). Autonomy is central to modern medical ethics. But does it automatically overrule any responsibility to the unborn child?

This dilemma is real and complex but cannot be characterised, simply, as courts or doctors exercising an age-old prejudice against women. Doctors and midwives support a patient's right to choose not to have medical treatment even where that decision might jeopardise the patient's own life, but they also feel moral responsibilities for the child.

They deplore the implication that pregnancy itself challenges a woman's mental competence. The BMA, the Mental Health Act Commission and other bodies are currently discussing how to prevent the misuse of the Mental Health Act in connection with Caesarean sections.

Patients are sometimes prepared to take risks, but apart from all the moral considerations about the impact of such risks on the child, doctors have the added burden of also trying to protect themselves from litigation.

A breach delivery is not an automatic death sentence for either mother or child. When I was practising obstetrics, vaginal delivery was the usual option in such cases, but it does carry higher risks of death, injury or permanent disability for the child.

Today, in these circumstances, the treatment of choice is Caesarean section, and doctors may rightly fear that using a less invasive but considerably more risky procedure may result in them being sued if harm results. We may be already at that stage. Last week's *British Medical Journal* suggested that by the year 2000, the average gynaecologist would spend half his or her time practising medicine and the rest providing reports for litigation.

Surely, we can transcend this confrontational approach and seek instead for courts, health professionals and patients to work together on solutions? Almost invariably, women want the best solution for their baby, but they may disagree with health professionals about how to ensure that. What we desperately need is an agreed way of negotiating that difference.

We are currently awaiting the Appeal Court's reasoning in the most recent case, where the woman was fully legally represented. This in itself is notable progress, and gives us an important opportunity for judges to help resolve the dilemma. If they are able to produce another "judgment of Solomon", as in the blood case, society will be in their debt.

Let us at least receive proper information about the case and the court's reasoning before we predict a return to the dark ages. Professor J STUART HORNER, Chairman, Medical Ethics Committee, British Medical Association, London WC1

Sir: Dr Robert Forman (letter, 7 March) ignores the purpose of private medical insurance: namely to guard against unforeseen medical needs of an acute nature. If every normal pregnancy was paid for, the premiums would have



to be set at a level which would make it impossible for many people to protect themselves against much less routine events such as open heart surgery. ANDREW VALLANCE-OWEN, Medical Director, BUPA, London WC1

## State can run pensions better

Sir: We need properly funded pensions ("Tories plan to privatise pensions", 5 March). But why should we privatise this? The pensions industry has not a good record; many are still waiting for action on the *retired due for losses* when they were talked out of employers' pension schemes into private schemes.

What is required is for the Government itself to set aside and invest funds to create its own funded pensions, allowing all the funds to be used for pensions instead of part going to the profit of private companies. This could be run by the staff who would anyway be employed policing private schemes, allowing for further savings.

Surely this, not privatisation, is the way to a fair future for the old. STEWART BLACK, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham

## UK's failure over global warming

Sir: Dr Patrick Green of Friends of the Earth (letter, 6 March) is quite right that the European Union's decisions on global warming are

not as radical as your original article made them appear. Labour strongly supported the first proposals from the Dutch presidency, which would have committed to the EU to a reduction of 8 per cent in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2005 and 12 per cent by 2010.

The UK's share of this obligation would have required us to cut emissions by 20 per cent by 2010, precisely the figure set out by Labour in its environment policy document *In Trust for Tomorrow*. This target was removed from the statement issued after the EU Environment Council, on the insistence of John Gummer, who then had the cheek to present the final statement as another green triumph for his government!

The truth is that Mr Gummer will not offer any UK targets beyond those that will be achieved without government intervention, largely as a result of the destruction of our coal industry.

Labour remains committed to its *In Trust for Tomorrow* targets. We will promote green public transport, energy efficiency, and renewable energy sources.

Waiting for the rest of the world to agree with us on the need for action is an abdication of responsibility. Britain can and must lead the way, with our partners in Europe, towards a green future. MICHAEL MEACHER MP (Oldham West, Lab), Shadow Secretary of State for Environmental Protection, House of Commons, London SW1

## White men are insulted most

Sir: Alexander Hofman (letter, 8 March) states as a fact that "there are far more ways to insult a woman or a foreigner than there are to insult a white male".

Even the most cursory of glances through Partridge's *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* reveals that for every one derogatory term describing a female there are at least seven insulting males, while terms derogatory to foreigners (and blacks) are about only one fifteenth as common as terms insulting (presumably) white English males.

Insulting each other with imagination and verve has been, since the beginning of time, the way English males relate to each other. JOHN FLETCHER, Shepton Mallet, Somerset

## Mink-farming diminishes us

Sir: What a thoroughly complacent and depressing article by Richard North about the factory farming of a wild animal – mink ("Fur coats come in from the cold", 6 March). Mink farmers appear to be proud of the tidiness, cleanliness and lack of smell within the little Belsens that they have created.

No discussion is raised of the possibility of the animal having an

opportunity to live its life in accord with its wild and courageous nature. It is seen as a provider for our consumption and profit for its insensitive breeder.

What of the ethics of this business? What of the real needs of these creatures doomed to be gassed at seven months of age?

Just open the cage and see it bolt for the freedom of fresh air amongst woodland and stream. We are all diminished by this appalling trade. R BURFOOT, East Twickenham, Middlesex

## Bring on the virtual cat

Sir: I was interested to read the item on the Japanese craze for Tamagotchi, the virtual reality pet ("Virtual poo in the handbag becomes a fashion accessory that no girl can do without", 7 March).

Would it be too much to hope that this country's millions of cat-owners might be persuaded to adopt them in place of the real thing?

The thought of cat poo (even of the virtual kind) being deposited in the owner's handbag rather than on every freshly dug patch of soil in my garden fills me with delight.

Think also of the acres of supermarket shelf space which would not be required if tins of cat food were no longer to be stocked. R SHEPPARD, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire

## Essential role of the Treasury

Sir: You are wrong to believe that the Treasury can supply "controlled, effective public expenditure" without being involved in the policies and operations of individual government departments ("A lost opportunity to rethink the Treasury", leading article 27 February).

The Treasury needs to "have a finger in every aspect of a reforming Labour administration" if this administration is to introduce effective policies, and keep its expenditure under control. Effective new policies do not spring fully fledged from the minds of ministers; they have to evolve through informed debate, outside and inside the government machine. The wider and better informed this debate, the more effective are the policies likely to prove.

The Treasury, as the controller of public expenditure, needs to participate in this debate; it is the only department that can compare the virtues of policies and expenditure across the government machine. Indeed, the Treasury's involvement in policy-making can improve the effectiveness of government policies, by providing an outside, informed and critical view. The poll tax shows what can happen if new policies do not get this examination.

A new government, with new policies, will increase the demands on the Treasury. A handover of government would represent the worst of times to reduce the administration's ability to test new policies and control public expenditure. DAVID SAWERS, Angmering-on-Sea, West Sussex

## 'Grey power' may need a hand

Sir: Your admirable leading article "There's no future in a Peter Pan society" (8 March), which neatly captured the obsession of all the major political parties with the cult of youth, noted that "older people are... much more likely to vote". This is a dangerous generalisation.

It may be true of the recently retired, relatively affluent and still physically active, but evidence of turn-out at the last general election demonstrated alarmingly low voting figures for the half million older people living in residential care homes, nursing homes and other long-stay care settings.

Many of this group are old, lonely, indeed and severely disabled. They are in need of precisely the sort of regular help and support which is now seriously under-funded. A democracy worthy of the name would be eager to hear their voices, not least on the issues on which their experience as service-users makes them powerfully informed.

The staff of homes, the friends and relatives of older people in care, and professionals such as social workers and care managers should be making specific efforts to ensure that every resident who wishes to do so has the chance to register their vote when the time comes.

Counsel and Care has prepared a free briefing paper on issues such as postal and proxy voting, and transport and access to polling stations, which we would be happy to distribute to anyone who can make use of it.

JEFF SMITH, General Manager, Counsel & Care, 16 Bonny Street, London NW1 9PG

Sir: "Grey power" absent from British public life (leading article, 8 March)? What are you talking about? It was mentioned by Polly Toynbee only the previous day that the average age of Tory party members is 64. Perhaps your "Peter Pan" society is a cultural backlash after 18 years of "grey power". MARY HARRINGTON (young person), Kings Langley, Hertfordshire

## Classical foot in the mouth

Sir: Miles Kingston (column, 6 March) might be interested to hear that at the "Partners in Business" conference last Monday, one of the introductory speakers introduced himself as an *alumnus* of Cambridge University. He was followed by Howard Davies of the Bank of England, who introduced himself as an *alumnus* of Oxford and went on to say what a pity it was that they had stopped teaching Latin at the other place. The chuckles from the audience suggested that Latin is not dead yet. LAWRENCE FENELON, Uppingham, Rutland

## Camp followers of early cloning

Sir: What is all the fuss about human cloning? Gays were doing this back in the Seventies and early Eighties, as anyone who visited the Markham Arms in Chelsea on a Saturday lunchtime will tell you. DAVID GWINNITT, London SE25

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E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.



## The cost of the royal snub to Carey

More self-indulgence by Prince Charles marks a new stage in privatising the monarchy, argues Paul Valley

The Queen even cracked a joke, apparently. The reports were that it was a relaxed, even jolly occasion at Windsor Castle yesterday when Prince William affirmed acceptance of the teachings of a Church founded by his ancestor, Henry VIII, in the castle's 500-year-old chapel. The Prince and Princess of Wales behaved civilly, cordially even, onlookers said. The Bishop of London, Rt Rev Richard Chartres, was as urbane, dignified and traditionalist as everyone had hoped.

There's the rub. For this was the first time this century that the Archbishop of Canterbury was not asked to officiate at the confirmation of a future monarch and head of the Church of England. The Palace had denied there was a snub. Dr George Carey issued a face-saving statement to the effect that he wholeheartedly approved of the choice of Bishop Chartres. "The Bishop of London is dean of the Chapels Royal, so it is entirely appropriate that he should be asked to officiate." The archbishop was, he insisted, anxious to encourage warm relationships between other senior bishops and the Royal Family.

Few in the Church were convinced. It is said that neither the Prince nor the Princess of Wales is keen on Dr Carey. Prince Charles dislikes his happy-clappy, evangelical bent in worship. He was also less than impressed with the answers the primarist gave on radio the morning when he appeared to launch his crusade to re-moralise Britain - which unlikely coincided with the announcement of the Charles and Di divorce. The princess is said to be unhappy about the way the Archbishop counselled her before the divorce.

Add to that Dr Carey's East End earnestness compared with the assured ease of Dr Chartres, one of the Church's wealthiest clerics, who was at Cambridge with the Prince and whose churchmanship is firmly in the traditionalist camp; he is an opponent of women priests and an enthusiast for the Shakespearean cadences of the Book of Common Prayer.

Does this really matter? Only insofar as it is another step in the unwitting privatisation of the British monarchy. What Prince Charles has done, and his mother has apparently sanctioned, is a further confusion of the institutional and the private. In a country with an established church the confirmation of its future head is a matter of state, and not one for the exercise of "personal choice" with which contemporary society is fixated.

There is more to this than mere muddled thinking by an heir apparent who wants to broaden his future role to that of Defender of Faiths, though his broad-mindedness does not even stretch the full width of the Church of England. Prince Charles must have known the signals that would be sent by his decision not to involve the Archbishop of Canterbury. Charles, his brothers and sister and the Queen herself were all confirmed by the holders of that office.

The idea that the abstractions which undergird any society are vested in offices rather than resting in individuals is now rather unfashionable, and one that our tabloid culture seems to find impossible to comprehend. Certainly the royal family has not been estate in guarding the distinction, as Ben Pimlott's biography of the Queen pointed out, with its catalogue of misjudgements of which the royal *It's a Knockout* was only the most egregious.

It is not the personal style of George Carey, which ought to be the issue, any more than it is the personal merit of the Prince of Wales that ensures that he is accorded respect. Were matters of state to be reduced to that, then what would stop some future House of Commons choosing to invite the Princess Royal rather than the King to open Parliament, on the grounds that she is more popular in the opinion polls?

Of course, it may be that we do not need an established church. Perhaps we do not need a monarchy. But many still see value in a nation's identification with something beyond the temporal - and, within the temporal, beyond the merely political and economic. The Royal Family ought to be custodians of this sense of national soul. If, self-indulgently, they are willing to forfeit it, that may be something we all come to regret.

## A naïve fish in very dangerous waters

by Polly Toynbee



Rupert Murdoch is about to seize control of terrestrial television. So why, at this crucial moment, has the BBC thrown its support behind the great predator?

This is important: in some 10 years' time they are going to switch off your television set. It will be a drastic change, ordered by last year's Broadcasting Act. It means everyone will have to buy into the digital age with a new black box on top of their television set sold by a private company. There will be no choice in the matter - you will only be able to view your existing channels on new digital television.

That is why the question of who wins control of that box matters more than any other broadcasting issue for a long time. Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB already controls satellite broadcasting. He already has 90 per cent of all paid-for viewing, as well as over 40 per cent of national newspaper readership. Now he has joined a consortium to bid for control of digital terrestrial television as well, threatening to give this monopolist vast extra power.

But there is still time for him to be stopped. There is another bid in for this key licence and soon the Independent Television Commission (ITC) will have to choose between the two: one is BDB - the Murdoch/Carlton/Granada consortium, a Goliath with loads of money, experience and sports rights. The other is a David in comparison, a good bid but with a lot less clout - DTN, Digital Television Network - run by CableTel, one of the existing cable operators. (No money changes hands in this bidding: the ITC gives away this licence only on grounds of best quality and feasibility.) This Friday, 14 March, sees the end of the public consultation period, so there is still time to lobby the ITC. Can the ITC be the first British institution to take a stand against the galloping power of the Murdoch monopoly where all others have failed?

The BBC's role in all of this has astonished onlookers. Suddenly and unexpectedly the BBC announced its backing for the Goliath-Murdoch consortium. It looks like a serious and puzzling blunder. After a long and as yet inconclusive fight against Murdoch's domination of the gateway to satellite digital broadcasting, the BBC has jumped straight into the jaws of the enemy. Why is our national public broadcaster backing the nation's most dangerous media predator?

"No, the BBC is not in bed with Murdoch, only in the same bed-room," protests Sir Christopher Bland, the BBC's chairman - the sort of defence which judges in old-style adultery cases rightly look at askance. This from the man who only three months ago warned the world of Murdoch's abuse of his uncompetitive dominance in satellite. (Murdoch threw the BBC off his Star satellite when the Chinese government objected to BBC reporting.) So why did the BBC do it? When I asked Sir Christopher Bland he said that they regarded the BDB bid (Goliath) as the only one that was likely to succeed in getting digital terrestrial off the ground.

Why? Because, he says, in the end Murdoch has shown that premium sports events are the battering ram that force pay TV into British homes. He who controls football rights is king - and Murdoch has them all sewn up. So, if it is inevitable that the BBC will be forced not only to go through Murdoch's satellite box, but also his terrestrial box, they had better jump in with him quick and

take the extra money he is offering now for their support while it matters - to help persuade the ITC to give them the licence. (The David bidders would, of course, have matched or bettered this bribe to get the BBC on their side, had they been given the chance.) The backing of the BBC gives huge added respectability to BSkyB, Carlton and Granada. But the BBC did not have to endorse either bid. That might have been the proper unbiased stand, since all the existing BBC and ITV channels will appear anyway on whichever system wins the licence. Even better, and maybe what Murdoch feared, the BBC could have taken a principled stand and publicly exhorted the ITC not to give away further control of Britain's media to Murdoch. Would the ITC have dared to stand up to Murdoch had the BBC signed up a very proper public anxiety about the malign influence of the Murdoch empire? I doubt it, and so, presumably, did the Murdoch BDB consortium. Is the BBC right that Mur-

doch's sports rights will inevitably win the day? No, because it is by no means clear that Murdoch has those rights for digital terrestrial television sewn up, a fact backed up by City media analysts. Much depends on a case being brought by the Office of Fair Trading. What's more, if the ITC wants to oppose Murdoch, they could throw their weight behind a demand that the sports rights cartel should be broken and the rights unbundled. But anyway, who says sports rights are the only battering ram to break into the pay TV market? Sports may not be king, after all. Sales of Sky services have been unexpectedly sluggish, only reaching 23 per cent of homes. Sports fanatics do not rule the roost. CableTel recently has been experimenting with a far more successful approach. Instead of offering a very expensive package of channels, they have offered a very cheap starter pack. People resent paying BSkyB's high price for a package of many channels when they may only want two or three.

This low-cost approach has achieved a spectacular 40 per cent penetration of households in the areas where it has been tried, not led by sports.

Why should the terrestrial licence go to David (DTN) and not to Goliath (BDB)? The single overwhelming reason is because they are not Murdoch. It would keep open a genuine free market in the digital future for competition between two different digital operators, in satellite and terrestrial, instead of, in effect, just one.

What else is in their favour? They will produce a single set-top box that will be compatible with all three systems - satellite, terrestrial and cable. (The Goliath bid will not offer cable on their box so those who want both would need two boxes.) DTN's box will be capable of offering interactive services from day one - shopping, banking, information on tap. (Goliath will have no interactive services for the time being.) DTN will take the BBC's new arts and education channels. (Goliath says

they have no room for these uncommercial ventures.) Both bids will have premium movies. Finally, DTN will charge viewers only half the sum for the same number of channels in its full package that Goliath plans to

charge. That means they would stand an excellent chance of making digital terrestrial work. Even Sir Christopher Bland acknowledges that DTN has put together an excellent bid.

The BBC has no choice but to ride the tiger of the commercial world, because there is soon to be no other access to broadcasting. But this first crucial brush with it bodes very ill for future dealings. The BBC is a delicate, glittering and tasty angel fish swim in shark-infested waters.

Consider this: by the year 2005 media analysts expect Murdoch to make some £500m a year out of the terrestrial deal if they win the licence. The BBC, on the other hand, will make a paltry £40m (a tiny fraction of its £1.8bn licence fee). Other members of the consortium also stand to make far less than Murdoch. The BBC is selling its soul for very few pieces of silver. Sir Christopher, himself a millionaire television entrepreneur, was affronted when I suggested they the BBC had been naïve, but there is no other word for it. The BBC's endorsement was worth a very great deal to Murdoch - and they have given it wantonly, virtually for free, when they should not have given it at all.

One example of that naïveté that has astounded media analysts: the BBC announced its backing for the Goliath consortium without having negotiated the most essential terms. The BBC has always expressed alarm that, whether on satellite or terrestrial, it will be the Sky channels that come up on the screen when viewers switch on - BBC channels may be relegated to some obscure hard-to-find part of the programme menu. Why did the BBC not withhold its endorsement of the Goliath bid until it had secured the best terms on everything before giving away its precious public endorsement?

All is not lost. If the ITC is not bamboozled by the BBC's bizarrely wrong-headed endorsement of Goliath, it can still make the daring decision to give the licence to David instead. It would be a brave decision - for DTN is untried, small and independent. Goliath is a safe pair of hands - the same hands already throttling competition out of so much of the British newspaper and television industries.

Today the British Film Institute will host an open debate where both bidders will face one another. Meanwhile, you have four more days to complain to: The Director of Public Affairs, Independent Television Commission, 33 Foley Street, London W1P 7LB. Take up your pens and write now.

## Crows, lawnmowers and signs of spring

How do we know when spring is really here? Easy! All you need do is tick off the following check-list. You know spring is coming when:

1. People say: "Shouldn't we put some food out for the birds?"
2. Egg-shaped bits of chocolate appear in the shops in nasty bits of silver paper.
3. Calendars are reduced in price.
4. You start asking people: "Do we put the clocks back or forward in spring?" I can never remember.
5. Country lanes are closed by road works and signs saying WAIT HERE WHEN LIGHT IS RED.
6. You come across a circular from your local garden machinery depot urging you to get your lawnmower serviced four months ago.
7. It starts being light at some incredibly late hour such as 6 pm.
8. You start spotting cobwebs round the house which must have been there all winter.
9. You hear a strange buzzing sound and realise it is a fly.
10. Someone says: "It's not food that's so important to put out for the birds as water, in case it freezes."

11. One day, when it's been raining all day, a water authority announces that shortages are so bad it is thinking of imposing a hosepipe ban.
12. You think you see the first daffodil on the lawn, but it's only a piece of yellow wrapping paper.
13. You take your lawnmower in for a service.
14. You hear someone say: "I wonder why they call it Mother's Day when it is really Mothering Sunday?"
15. It snows unexpectedly.
16. Headlines say: "Freak snow brings Britain to a halt".
17. You think you see a yellowhammer in the garden, but it's only a daffodil.
18. It thaws unexpectedly.
19. Headlines say: "Freak thaw brings Britain to wet standstill".
20. Someone says: "I think you're meant to stop putting food out for the birds after a while, otherwise they become dependent."
21. The man at the lawnmower place says: "Mm, if you'd brought it to us in November, it would have been ready by now. As it is, a lot of people have brought their mowers



Miles Kingston

in late like you, so you'll be lucky to have it by ..."

22. Looking at all the forsythia, you wonder idly who Forsyth was.
23. The England cricket team fly in from wherever they've been for four months, but are not crushed by welcoming crowds at Heathrow.
24. They look very brown as they get off the plane.
25. Which reminds you that you

haven't even thought about booking your summer holiday yet.

26. You hear ghostly noises in your chimney.
27. Bits of stick start falling into your fireplace.
28. Your neighbour says, "I suppose you know you've got crows building a nest in your chimney?"
29. You look up "Chimney Sweep" in the Yellow Pages.
30. Long-lost footballs come out of hibernation in the garden.
31. Each one of which, without fail, has acquired a puncture.
32. That long-lost Christmas present which your relatives in Canada swore they had sent off in early December finally turns up.
33. Containing a ghastly shirt.
34. Football managers, as their team is knocked out of the FA Cup, all say they are glad to have a chance to concentrate on the League.
35. The sweep arrives.
36. He says: "I suppose you know those crows up the chimney have got a nest full of babies?"
37. You ask him what should be done about it.
38. He says: "Light a fire. That

should settle the little beggars."

39. You say nothing.
40. He sweeps the chimney and goes away.
41. In an idle moment you look up forsythia and find that it was named after a Mr Forsyth, once head of parks in Kensington.
42. You start wondering if wistaria is named after a Mr Wistar.
43. You find it was indeed named after a Professor Caspar Wistar.
44. You start wondering if buddleia, aubretia and fuchsia were named after Buddle, Aubriet and Fuchs.
45. Your partner expresses concern that the lawn is unmown, the yard is full of deflated footballs, the house is cold and botanical dictionaries are lying open all over the house.
46. You start to explain why.
47. But when you find yourself saying that the house is cold because you haven't the heart to broil some baby crows, you fade into silence.
48. You stop putting food out for the birds because they're not eating it.
49. The forsythia blooms start falling.
50. It's nearly time for summer.

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# business & city

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## BT's top two in line for £500,000 bonuses



Sir Iain Vallance: Rewarded for 'outstanding' year

**Chris Godsmark**  
Business Correspondent

The two most senior executives running British Telecom are each likely to receive £500,000 bonuses this year, almost doubling their annual salaries and catapulting them into the select group of British business leaders paid more than £1m a year.

Industry sources said annual cash bonuses for Sir Iain Vallance, BT chairman, and Sir Peter Bonfield, chief executive, would be raised dramatically in recognition of their "outstanding" performance during 1996, which saw the £13bn merger announcement with US long-distance partner MCI and several other overseas deals, including BT's £1bn stake in a French joint venture.

The executive pay committee headed by Sir Colin Marshall, BT's deputy chairman, is thought to have approved the increases in principle and will meet later this month to sign off the payouts. The group's scheme limits annual bonuses at 50 per cent of salary, raising the prospect that Sir Colin's com-

mittee may temporarily remove the cap to reflect what analysts agree has been an "exceptional year" for the company. BT previously insisted its executive pay structure met the best practice recommendations of the Greenbury Committee, which said pay should reflect performance. The company is likely to argue that Sir Iain's bonus increase would be justified because he was the main driving force behind the MCI deal. Sir Iain's basic pay went up by £20,000 to £500,000, while Sir Peter's salary has

already risen this year by £95,000 to £570,000. A £500,000 bonus for Sir Iain would represent an increase of more than 200 per cent on his last discretionary payout of £162,000 for the year to the end of March 1996, which itself represented a 40 per cent rise on 1995. Similar comparisons are not possible for Sir Peter, who joined BT from computer giant ICL at the start of 1996. One analyst, who did not want to be named, suggested BT's complex system of executive bonuses, based around personal performance targets, could be revised to reflect the MCI merger. Each year staff are encouraged to improve upon individual performance criteria. This suggests the bonus increases could be duplicated for other board members and senior executives. Another winner would be Robert Brace, finance director designate of the merged group, to be renamed Centric. His basic salary has already risen by £50,000 to £250,000. The bonuses will be disclosed in BT's annual report, to be published in May. However, BT

could face a summer of discontent from its band of small investors, similar to the future over British Gas's 75 per cent pay rise for its former chief executive, Cedric Brown. At the annual general meeting in July shareholders will also be asked to approve a replacement for BT's complex long-term executive bonus scheme, introduced in 1994, which could give managers up to a further 100 per cent of basic salary, paid out in the company's shares. Sir Colin's team is expected to propose a simpler scheme.

The annual bonuses will narrow the pay gap between BT's senior management and MCI's, where staff have traditionally been paid partly with generous share options. Bert Roberts, MCI's chairman, is expected to receive cash and shares worth almost \$90m (£55m) if the deal is approved, while some 200 employees will make at least \$1m each from the merger. Staff at MCI are unhappy at BT's plans to end the share option culture, fearing it would remove their incentive to outperform competitors.

## Ex-Barings boss will not challenge three-year ban

**Jill Treanor**  
Banking Correspondent

Ian Hopkins, the former head of treasury and risk at Barings, has decided not to appeal against an independent City tribunal's decision to ban him from working as a director of a securities company in London, even though he rejects its findings.

He had until last Friday to appeal against the tribunal's ruling over the case brought against Mr Hopkins by the Securities and Futures Authority (SFA), the City regulator, in January. He was also required to pay £10,000 in costs.

Mr Hopkins, who has refused to participate in the regulatory proceedings of the SFA, insisted that he rejected the findings of the disciplinary panel. He said he found the decision to brand him as "unfit" to act as a director of a securities company as "odious". He added: "I disregard it, I reject it."

He was among a number of former Barings executives

against whom the SFA brought disciplinary charges after the downfall of the bank in 1995. It collapsed after the Singapore-based trader, Nick Leeson, ran up losses of more than £800m through unauthorised trading. Mr Hopkins subsequently claimed he was a whistleblower, telling the Commons Treasury Select Committee investigation into Barings last year that his attempts to warn more senior Barings executives about potential problems had gone unheeded.

The SFA has not yet published the findings of the tribunal but Mr Hopkins confirmed for the first time that he had been banned from the register of directors for three years and ordered to pay costs of £10,000, in addition to being found to be "unfit" to act as director of a securities company.

Mr Hopkins claimed that he had been urged by a senior executive of the SFA to negotiate a settlement of the charges in the same way that Mary Walz, his former col-

league, had. She was not banned by the regulator but received a reprimand and was required to pay the sum of £5,000 towards costs after agreeing to settle with the SFA instead of taking her case to a tribunal.

He said he too may have been able to escape being branded as "unfit" to act as director if he had agreed to settle. But to do so would have required Mr Hopkins to admit he failed to act with "due skill, care and diligence". He explained: "To me, it would be selling my soul. Had I done that, I would have avoided an unfit declaration and got away with a reprimand."

The SFA, which cannot publish the outcome of tribunals until the appeals process has been completed, confirmed it had offered Mr Hopkins the chance to follow the settlement process available to all City executives.

But the SFA, which should be free to reveal the outcome of the tribunal this week, said there were no terms and conditions attached to offer.

## £2.8bn subsidy for Nat Express

**Michael Harrison**

The coach group National Express, which has emerged from rail privatisation as Britain's biggest passenger train operator, will receive almost £2.8bn in subsidies – a third of all the taxpayers' money being pumped into the network.

The scale of the support puts National Express on a par with British Leyland, British Coal and British Steel, all recipients of huge state handouts in the 1970s and 1980s.

A detailed breakdown of the subsidies shows that National Express will get £2.76bn over the next seven to 15 years to run the five passenger franchises it has taken over.

By contrast, Richard Branson's Virgin Group, which won the Cross Country and West Coast Mainline franchises, will make net payments to the Government of £533m over the 15-year life of the two franchises.

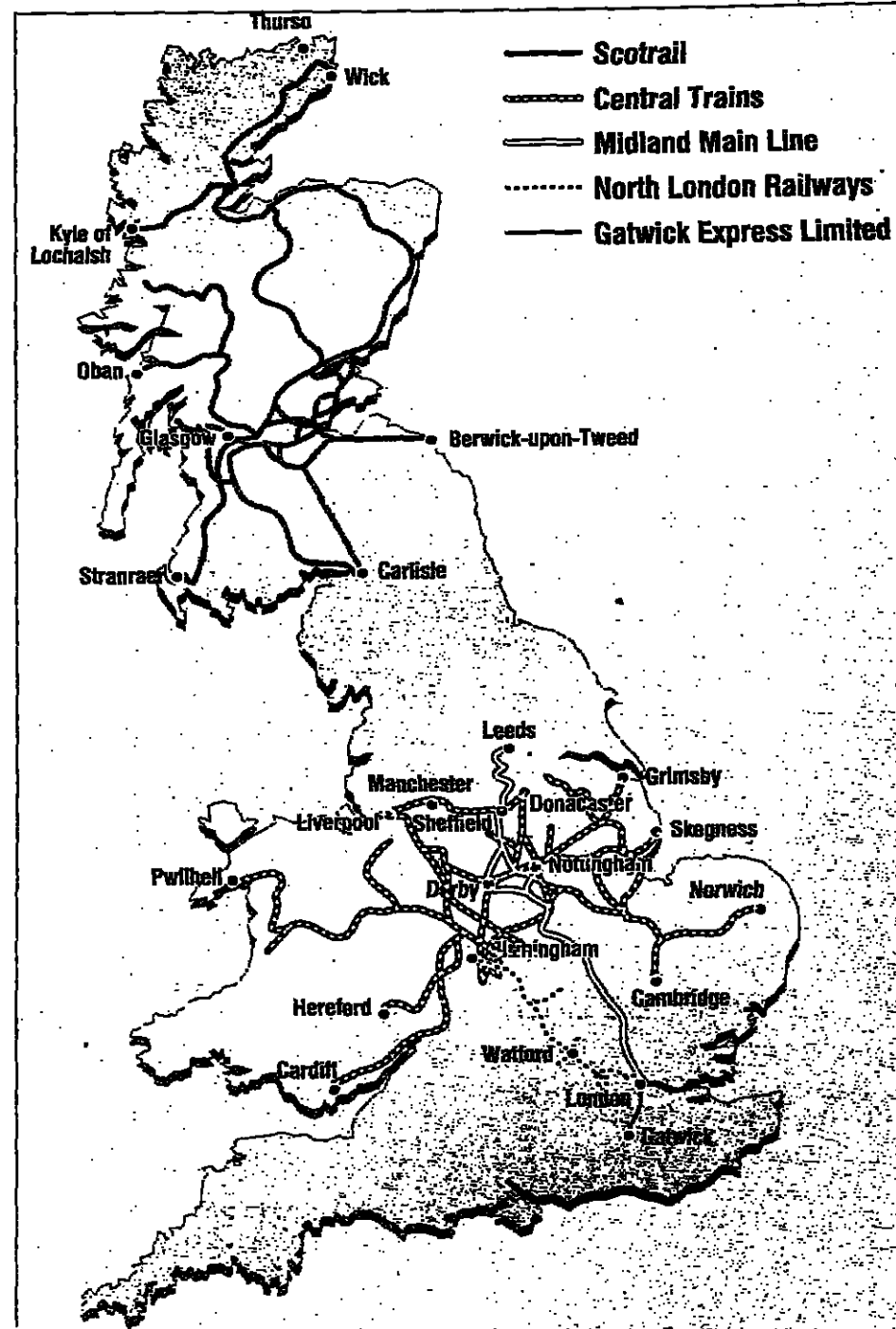
National Express will receive £1.662bn in support to operate Scotrail for the next seven years, a further £1.086bn for Central Trains and £220bn in subsidy for North London Trains.

But it will make payments of £207m to the rail franchising director over the life of its franchises to operate the Gatwick Express and Midland Mainline, which runs InterCity services to the Midlands and the North.

The next biggest recipient of state support will be Mersey-side-based bus group: MTL Trust Holdings, which will get £1.7bn to run the heavily loss-making Merseyrail and the Regional Railways North East.

The French group Generale des Eaux, which operates under the name of Connex, is getting £941m to run Network South Central and South Eastern.

Prism, which was also set up



by a group of bus operators, will get £903m for the four franchises it has won, including the London-Tilbury-Southend Line, once dubbed the Misery Line. In total, £8.2bn will be paid out in subsidies to private rail operators between now and 2012 to enable them to pay Rail-

track's access charges. National Express will receive 34 per cent of this. In the coming year it will account for 28 per cent of all subsidies, rising to a peak of 45 per cent in 2003-2004.

Although National Express won the biggest number of franchises, it will only rank

third in market share, based on passenger revenues, behind Connex and Virgin.

Last year the rail network took £2.7bn in fares. National Express franchises will account for just over 14 per cent of fare income while Connex will get 16 per cent.

## NatWest staff face sack over £50m loss

**Clifford German**

National Westminster Bank is expected to take tough disciplinary action this week against individuals held responsible for £50m of losses incurred by the options trading department at NatWest Capital Markets, in an attempt to head off action by the Bank of England.

A spokesman for NatWest confirmed yesterday that the independent report into the "hole" in the department's trading book, which is being prepared by accountants Coopers & Lybrand and lawyers Linklaters & Paines, would be delivered later this week. He said the bank intended to take swift action over its contents.

The report is expected to be unequivocal and point to poor pricing of interest-rate options contracts offered by the options department, which went unnoticed and uncorrected over a 12-month period. The document is likely to blame incompetence and poor monitoring and controls rather than personal gain.

But City sources also expect the bank to take tough and prompt action to limit any damage to confidence in its activities and to placate the Bank of England, which will also see a copy of the report.

The disciplinary moves could involve the dismissal of two or three individuals held directly responsible for the losses and for failing to spot them earlier. Up to half a dozen others could be demoted or moved sideways and the departments involved, including the compliance and risk management departments as well as options trading, could be restructured.

Individual bonuses for 1996, some of which have been paid, will also be reassessed. NatWest declined to comment on whether some bonuses would have to be paid back.

## Labour warns utilities not to attack tax plans

**Chris Godsmark**

Labour will today warn heads of the privatised utilities not to indulge in public attacks on the party's planned windfall tax during the election campaign.

The assault by John Battle, Labour's energy spokesman, to a conference of managers in London this morning, comes after David Jefferies, chairman of the Electricity Association and of the National Grid, used a dinner speech last week to plead for the Labour Party to drop the tax proposal. Mr Battle, who was a guest on Mr Jef-

feries' table at the dinner, said he was given no warning about the onslaught.

Mr Battle said yesterday Mr Jefferies' remarks had "echoed Conservative policy on the windfall tax". His speech, the last policy address he will give before the election, urges utility chiefs to work with Labour to implement the tax. Mr Battle will warn: "It is often difficult to have a constructive dialogue when some utility executives choose to use megaphone diplomacy in support of the Conservative propaganda machine."

He will say: "We are facing a

heated few weeks and I hope that the utility industries will continue to work with us to discuss the best way forward, rather than joining with those who use public comment and after-dinner speeches to close down the conversation in favour of a political slanging match."

Mr Jefferies could not be contacted yesterday. National Grid said he was speaking in his capacity as head of the Electricity Association, which represents privatised power companies, and not as head of the transmission business. A spokeswoman for the association said the industry "welcomed" Mr Battle's call for greater co-operation.

She said: "Any public comment on the windfall tax made by an electricity industry executive will have already been voiced privately with senior Labour Party representatives. Several meetings on the matter were held between January and June 1996. Subsequently, further meetings were requested by the industry but were discouraged by Labour."

The speech today also gives the clearest indication yet that Labour might be prepared to extend the six-month timetable for introducing domestic electricity competition next year if the process looks likely to cause disruption to customers.

## Managers say Government Euro policy damages UK

**Clifford German**

The Institute of Management has launched one of the most outspoken attacks yet by a business association on the Government's policy towards Europe, claiming the Conservative approach has damaged British interests abroad.

In its pre-election manifesto, the institute, which has 76,000 members, insists the UK must be at the centre of the debate over the single European currency. Urging a policy of "constructive engagement", the manifesto says there are dangers in the way the UK is perceived in Europe.

It says: "A consistent policy tone of distance and disengagement, and at times belligerent confrontation, has damaged the UK's best interests."

Though the institute does not formally ally itself with any political party, the document will be seen as a clear boost for Labour as the party attempts to improve its standing with the business community. It says the judgement over whether or not to join the currency should only be taken on economic grounds and it calls on the Government to say whether it would rule out taking part in economic and monetary union. The manifesto also distances

the body from the Government's attack on the Social Chapter, calling instead for a "more mature debate" on the issue. "For some large organisations the Social Chapter does not hold many fears," it says.

It also accuses the Government of obstructing companies' attempts to get EU grant aid. It concludes: "The present Government's frequently antagonistic stance towards the EU does not help UK organisations or regions to benefit."

Education policy also comes in for attack, with the institute arguing that the system has failed to match standards of the UK's global competitors.

### IN BRIEF

• The position of rebel investors in Christian Salvanesen is looking increasingly isolated ahead of Thursday's shareholder meeting after it emerged that Standard Life has added its voice to that of Scottish Widows in support of management proposals to pay a £100m special dividend. Graham Wood, head of UK investment at the giant Scottish life insurer, last week revealed his hand, saying the two investors leading the crusade – Sir Gerald Elliot, a former chairman, and John Grant, former finance director at Lucas – had failed to convince him of their arguments against management plans to pay the dividend and spin off Salvanesen's Aggreko hire division. Mr Wood said on Friday: "Up until now we have been rather inclined towards the existing board and management and that's the way I am still looking at it. The campaign led by Sir Gerald Elliot has raised the game, but at the end of the day ... we still don't think they have won the argument on the special dividend and the demerger."

• The signing of the BBC's long-awaited deal with Flextech to provide its first fully fledged pay-TV service has been delayed until late this week, as the Corporation's lawyers pore over the contract. The deal will allow the BBC to launch at least eight new channels without having to commit any money to the deal. Instead the BBC will throw open its television library to Flextech, a pay-TV company 51 per cent owned by American cable giant TCI. Under the deal Flextech will put in £20m of capital, backed with a standby credit facility of around £100m. Flextech will get a 50 per cent stake in the venture, which is set to run for 30 years.

• London, Liverpool, Glasgow, Manchester, Portsmouth and Swansea have all failed to create as many jobs as they should, according to a study by the consultancy firm Business Strategies. The five cities have all done poorly over the past decade even allowing for any inherent disadvantages in the existing employment mix, according to Richard Holt, the author. Towns and cities which have done better than expected include Milton Keynes, Aberdeen, Warrington, Swindon, Peterborough, Exeter and Northampton.

• Leading UK development organisations are calling on UK companies to report publicly on how they treat workers in underdeveloped countries. Although some companies have signed codes of conduct there is no effective method of checking those codes. The report, prepared by the New Economics Foundation and the Catholic Institute for International Relations, notes that Sainsbury has a pilot scheme to monitor codes of conduct, while Gap, the US clothing company, is a market leader in checking its own code.

• A huge west London office development known as the Ark, which dominates the Hammersmith skyline, has been sold for £42m by its Swedish owner to Despa, a German investment fund. The Ark's original developer, Ake Larson, collapsed during the slump in the commercial property market.

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100									
Index	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
FTSE 100	4,512.90	+112.0	+2.6	4,420.50	3,632.30	3,633			
FTSE 250	3,712.90	+45.2	+1.2	3,713.90	4,015.30	3,34			
FTSE 350	2,153.40	+49.4	+2.3	2,153.40	1,916.60	3.57			
FTSE SmallCap	2,362.50	+42.8	+9.4	2,362.50	1,954.06	2.89			
FTSE All-Share	2,152.14	+45.5	+2.2	2,152.14	1,791.95	5.52			
New York	7,577.43	+123.7	+1.9	7,577.43	5,232.54	1.96			
Hong Kong	10,152.74	+52.3	+1.9	10,152.74	10,004.87	3.61			
Frankfurt	3,775.25	+115.6	+3.6	3,775.25	2,253.36	1.44			

INTEREST RATES									
UK Interest Rates									
Bank of England base rate	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
3 month	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
6 month	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
1 year	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
2 year	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
3 year	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
5 year	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
10 year	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
15 year	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
20 year	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
25 year	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
30 year	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75

CURRENCIES									
£/\$									
Close	1.5077	+1.50	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089
1 month	1.5077	+1.50	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089
3 month	1.5077	+1.50	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089
6 month	1.5077	+1.50	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089
1 year	1.5077	+1.50	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089
2 year	1.5077	+1.50	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089
3 year	1.5077	+1.50	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089
5 year	1.5077	+1.50	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089
10 year	1.5077	+1.50	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089	1.5089



# We might not have to delay the start of EMU

**GAVYN DAVIES**

An alternative, perhaps preferable, procedure would simply be to allow the 1 January 1999 start date to be maintained, but for no members to be admitted to the monetary union from the start.

The financial markets have recently started to lose confidence that European Monetary Union will start on time in 1999. At the very least, this seems premature. While the markets have been fretting about the huge jump in unemployment in Germany, a wedge of other evidence suggests that the central European economies are at last picking up as export orders rise in response to weakening currencies. This is far more important for the chances of hitting the start date than any off-stage noises which are emanating from politicians at the moment. Goldman Sachs' latest forecasts show GDP growth in France and Germany reaching 2 to 2.5 per cent this year. On existing fiscal policies, this would produce budget deficit outturns of 3.4 per cent of GDP in both countries in 1997. While these outcomes would be higher than the 3 per cent permitted under a strict reading of the Maastricht convergence criteria, it seems unlikely that the entire project would fail, or be reviewed, on such a small divergence on just one of the convergence criteria. Either extra measures would be taken in France and Germany to push the deficits below 3 per cent of GDP, or the EU would choose to focus on forecasts for the outturn in 1998, or some other method would be found to fudge the outturn. Admittedly, any such fudges would make it difficult to exclude countries such as Italy (if necessary), while including Germany and France, and these problems have certainly not yet been solved. But in the European Union,

an old maxim states that where there is a political will, there is usually a political way. That would probably prove to be the case if the French and German budget deficits were fairly close to 3 per cent of GDP this year, despite the recent protestations of Chancellor Kohl (and many others in Germany) about the need to observe the convergence criteria to the letter. Different circumstances would, however, arise if GDP growth this year falls substantially short of the 2 to 2.5 per cent central forecast. For example, if GDP growth drops by 1 per cent this year compared with the central projection, then the budget deficits for France and Germany would rise to around 4 per cent of GDP this year, and would stay at 3.5 per cent of GDP in 1998. This higher path for the budget deficit would almost certainly lead to a postponement of the EMU project, since in the circumstances of continuing recession it would not be possible to introduce significant further restrictive measures to hit the Maastricht targets. Furthermore, as a recent study by Martin Brooks of Goldman Sachs points out, it is now too late to reverse this situation by easing monetary policy, since the scale of the required action appears implausible, and the time lags involved are now too long. For example, using simulations on macro-economic models, a combination of a 100 basis point reduction in German and French short-term interest rates, and a 4 per cent decline in the trade-weighted exchange rate in

those countries, would be required to offset a shortfall of 1 per cent in the growth rates. But such an easing in monetary policy would need to happen immediately in order to have any effect on the outcome for GDP and budget deficits this year. It is much more likely that an easing would not actually come until later this year, which would be too late to impact demand sufficiently in 1997, so budget deficits would significantly exceed target. What does all this imply for a possible postponement of the EMU start date? If it rapidly becomes clear that GDP growth is on course to hit 2 per cent or more this year, then neither the financial markets nor the governments of key EU countries are likely to contemplate seriously a postponement. However, if it becomes clear that the growth rate is remaining at or below last year's outturn of 1.3 per cent for France and Germany, then governments could start to contemplate the need for a delay. Or they could be forced to do so by market chaos. The question of whether it is possible to delay the start date in an orderly fashion would then arise. This is much more difficult than it may seem. Remember that Maastricht was intended to put in place an automatic glide-path to monetary union, with an absolutely final date of 1 January 1999 for the start of the project. Hence, the drafters of the Treaty did not include any specific provision for any delay

beyond that date. However, there are two possible escape routes which could be used to keep the Maastricht super-structure in place, without needing to draft a completely new Treaty, with all of the national ratification problems which would inevitably be involved. The first concerns Article 109.4, under which the Council of Ministers is empowered to set a date for the start of EMU, assuming that the launch has not already happened on 1 January 1997. It is clear that the drafters of the Treaty intended this provision to allow flexibility to set a start date in 1997 or 1998, failing which 1 January 1999 would automatically become the effective start date. However, this is not specifically stated in the Treaty, so there is a loophole under which the Council might be able to set a later start date (such as 1 January 2001) and still claim that the provisions of the Treaty have been respected. Although lawyers for the European Commission, and most member states, do not appear to believe that such a procedure would necessarily be legal, this loophole could nevertheless be adopted for overriding political reasons in extreme circumstances. But it would mean that member states would have to agree during 1997 to a new specific start date, and that may not be easy. An alternative, perhaps preferable, procedure would simply be to allow the 1 January 1999 start date to be maintained, but

for no members to be admitted to the monetary union from the start. Although this may seem absurd, it would in fact be quite practical, and it would enable future members to join the non-existent monetary union at some point in the future, when convergence criteria had been achieved. Under this procedure, the precise start date for a meaningful EMU would not be fixed in advance, and nor would the initial members be determined until later. Countries would simply opt in to the EMU super-structure when they were able to do so. This alternative would appear to have the advantage of great flexibility. But the disadvantage of this approach is that it might lack both political and financial market credibility. Certainly, it would be difficult to persuade electorates and markets to take seriously an empty monetary union for an undefined period, especially since the previously sacrosanct start date of 1 January 1999 would have been ditched. It must be very debatable whether EU politicians could overcome these problems and make any delay credible to the financial markets. Fortunately for them, the recent behaviour of the foreign exchange markets is less and less likely that this will become necessary. Ironically, after all the fuss the Germans have made about the need to create a strong European currency, it is the weakness of the German mark that may yet make EMU feasible in 1999.

Marks & Spencer, Britain's most profitable retailer, has signed a five-year distribution deal with BOC to spearhead a store-opening drive in the Far East, writes Chris Godsmark. BOC, which is responsible for distributing 85 per cent of M&S's chilled foods from de-

## BOC to distribute Marks & Spencer goods in South Korea

pots to UK stores and a fifth of its clothing, will deliver stock from a warehouse in Hemel Hempstead to up to eight stores planned to open in South Korea. The first M&S outlet will begin business later this month in the capital, Seoul, with a much larger six-floor store due to open in April. Two more

branches are likely to start trading by the end of this year. This is the first time M&S has appointed a single distributor to its overseas franchise outlets,

marking a more aggressive approach to its foreign expansion plans. The Korean stores are owned by P&S, a local conglomerate, while BOC will em-

ploy 35 staff at a large warehouse. M&S, which is spending £400m on new stores around the world over the next three years,

is also close to deciding whether to move into Japan, Taiwan and China. The M&S board is expected to meet in May to analyse re-

ports from staff on the three countries. Three years ago M&S abandoned a move into Japan because of problems with tariff barriers on imported goods. However, Sir Richard Greenbury, chairman, is keen to use the M&S brand to seek growth opportunities abroad.

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Item Sold	Retail Price	At Auction	Item Sold	Retail Price	At Auction
VHS Golf CTS	£5.00	£1.00	30 Wedding Dresses	£250	£35
M&S Photocopy	£4.95	£1.00	Pocket 125 sports car	£2,000	£750
Cashmere Coat	£240	£28	An Office Desk	£60	£2
Power Drill 1700 Cw CD	£300	£55	Dishwasher	£280	£20
Carbon Fishing Tackle	£100	£10	100 Computer Games	£200	£22
Photographic Equipment	£600	£30	Japan XLS Carbine	£1,000	£7,000
Computer Design System	£4,000	£180	Hi-tech Mobile Phone	£180	£11
Running Ribs	£14	£14	Pump	£30	£2
Garden Staircase	£70	£5	Asi Creditcarding System	£2,000	£5
NEC Office Phone System	£200	£2	Luxury Orthopaedic Bed	£900	£7
Case of Wine	£30	£5	Large Greenhouse	£250	£9
SBL Corners	£1,000	£10	Fractal CD Printing	£200	£2
Laser Printer	£600	£45	Designer Ceramic Crockery	£480	£25
Two Ceramic Dolls	£240	£60	Zanussi Washing Machine	£380	£75
Toyota Fushin Truck	£17,000	£130	Two Pairs of Shoes	£280	£11
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When we take reasonable precautions with all advertisements, readers are strongly advised to take professional advice before paying a deposit or entering into any financial commitment.

## back page: the week starts here

## IN THE INDEPENDENT



**Peter Hall**  
Leaving little to Waste



**Margaret Drabble**  
The baby that changed my life



**ABC**  
The lexicon of a comeback



**Dance:** The Birmingham Royal Ballet visits Plymouth this week as part of a national tour which will also take in Sunderland, Liverpool and Bradford. A double bill of Frederick Ashton's *The Dream* and Kenneth MacMillan's *Song of the Earth* will be on tomorrow and Wednesday, followed by *Sleeping Beauty* from 13 to 15 March. Tickets £15.50-£29.50. All evening performances at 7.30pm. Tickets for matinee performances are also available. Box office: 01752-267222.

## WHERE TO GO, WHAT TO SEE, WHAT TO DO

## They're off

**Racing:** Spring can't be far away... it's the highlight of the National Hunt season with the start of the Cheltenham Festival today. Lots of Guinness, Irish bonhomie and corporate entertaining. The Smurfit Champion Hurdle on Tuesday is the big one. 11-13 March. Gates open at 10.30am. Tickets Tue £50 club, £20 Tattersalls, £10 carriage enclosure. Box office 01242-513014.

## They're off?

**The Conservative Central Council Meeting** is being held in Bath on Friday and Saturday. In 1992 the Prime Minister used this rally as a springboard for the Tory general election campaign. If he does that again we could be looking at a campaign lasting seven weeks. If the Tories settle on May Day for D-Day. Oh dear.

## He's off

**Theatre:** Peter Hall's repertory company kicks off tonight at the Old Vic with a new production of Caryl Churchill's Broadway hit *Cloud Nine*. Tim McInnerny (of *Blackadder*) plays a leading role in this production, which examines sexual politics via trademark time leaps and generation conflicts. 2.30pm matinee, 7.30pm. Tickets £10-£19 until 16 March. Hall's season features 12 plays, including Harley Granville Barker's *Waste* and *Hurly Burly* by new writer David Rabe. Box office 0171-928 7616.

## Truly moving

**Film:** Over-hyped (?) but over here, at last. *The English Patient* opens nationwide this Friday with Ralph Fiennes, Juliette Binoche and Kristin Scott-Thomas. Our critic summarises: "Four damaged people end up sharing their

lives in a ruined Tuscan villa in 1944." Director Anthony Minghella's adaptation of



Ralph Fiennes: at last

Michael Ondaatje's Booker Prize-winning novel has been nominated for 12 Oscars.

## Opera now

**Opera:** This week only, don't miss an exciting new production of Verdi's masterpiece *La Traviata* in English (translation by David Pountney) at the Hackney Empire with Fiona O'Neill as Violetta. 12-15 March, 7.30pm. Some tickets left for Wednesday (£10). The rest: £12.50-£18.50. Box office 0181-985 2424.

**More opera:** Graham Vick's production of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* is back at the London Coliseum this Friday with Susan Bullock in the title role. Tickets £6.50-£50 weekdays and matinees. £8-£55 Saturdays. Performances at 7.30pm, except 22 March at 6.30pm. 0171-632 8300. Tickets for another Graham Vick

## Last chance

**Theatre:** Hurry to see Fascinating Aida's immensely successful West End show. *The I, W, Don't Give A Shit Girls*, during its extended run at the Apollo Theatre. 8pm every night until 15 March. Tickets £12.99 to £14.99. Box Office: 0171-494 3070.

## Last glance

**Architecture:** The current retrospective of the architect Denys Lasdun continues at the Royal Academy of Art, London, until Sunday. Tickets £3 (£2 concessions). Box office: 0171-494 5676.

production. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the Royal Opera House, are only available for 24 March. Prices from £82 to £272. Box office 0171-304 4000.

## Hey, hey

Many were the nights that we secretly prayed that their chapter in the book of pop history was finished, but now the original four-piece Monkees hit the road again for the first time in almost 30 years. Catch the Born Agains monkeying around throughout the week at Dublin (10 March), Cardiff (12), Sheffield (14), Manchester (15) or Bournemouth (16). Details and group bookings 0181-863 3266.

## Tip tap

**Dancing:** Dein Perry's *Tap Dogs* is an energetic, exciting, dexterous show with dancers even taking to the ceiling. As our critic put it: "It does to steel-capped boots what Gene Kelly did for umbrellas". Theatre Royal, Nottingham, 10-15 March. Tickets £8-£16.50 (£2 off cones). Details and box office 0115-948 2626.

## Nose job

**Fun(d)raising:** The Spice Girls, Kylie Minogue (a sort of Spice Girl of the Eighties), Lenny Henry and anyone who is anyone trying to be funny are among the acts to support Comic

Relief's Red Nose Day this Friday. BBC1 and 2 on 14 March from 7pm. From 11pm. The live event at Shepherd's Bush Empire is sold out. Box office: 0181-740 7474.

## Book it

**Fair:** Olympia hosts the UK's largest trade book fair, the London International Bookfair 1997. The headline attraction, especially for children and their parents, is the consumer software event *Follow the Mouse*, which is open to the public (admission free). National Hall Gallery Olympia, 15-16 March, 10am-5pm. (£15), call 0120-542 6454.

## Stub it

**Bad habits:** No Smoking Day on Wednesday marks the annual attempt to wean the addicted off the weed. A national campaign of posters and interviews will focus in particular on the 40 per cent of men and 38 per cent of women in the 20-24 age bracket who depend on their daily fix of nicotine.

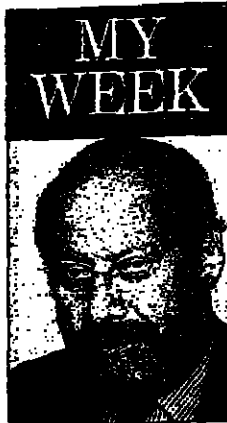
**L**ord Wyatt, who has been chairman of the Totalisator since God was a lad, made his final speech at the Tote's annual lunch last Wednesday, in which he protested that his post had been advertised and he, Wyatt, given no direct role in the selection procedure.

That is exactly how it should be: the chief interest of an incumbent is not to be outperformed by a successor. The Nolan rules governing appointments in the public sector were helpful but did not go far enough: they should have banned succession by the outgoing man's choice.

Woodrow announced that he favoured Lieutenant General Sir William Rous - which has probably put paid to the military man's hopes of this well-paid job. Unlike Sir William's brother Keith, 6th Earl of Stradbroke who lists "making babies" as his recreation and commutes between Oz and East Suffolk, the general has two sons and if Debreit's is to be believed, lives in Wellington Barracks, London SW1.

**Illustrated Book of Bottoms** comes China Hamilton's *A View From Behind*, is the good news from the editor. The review has a diary, a column on poker, which gives a game "more exciting than strip poker because there's a greater sense of anticipation", an article on voyeurism the winner of the Kensington and Chelsea Arts Council prize for poetry and a cookery page.

I quote the final sentence of one recipe: "Note: The tart is sufficient for six people so, unless you are planning an orgy, there should be plenty left for a vigorous replay."



**CLEMENT FREUD**

**I quote the final sentence of one recipe: 'The tart is sufficient for six people so, unless you are planning an orgy, there should be plenty left for a vigorous replay'**

**'G**o and see *Waste* at the Old Vic. The play was written by Granville Barker at the turn of the century, was due to be performed at the Court Theatre in Sloane Square (the "Royal" prefix along with the playing of the national anthem was jettisoned as a protest against censorship) and was banned by the Lord Chamberlain just before the first night.

Barker kept updating the play and the 1926 version - director Peter Hall considers it the very best rewrite - includes the Labour Party, the agony of Ireland and sleaze, though, "he asked me to tell you he was sure he could keep the worst out of the papers" shows that we have progressed. *The fact that a play called Shopping and Fucking* was on in the West End might cause some to believe that we have overdone freedom of expression: they would be those unaware of the reference to female pudendum - *Oh quelle cue tu as* - that ran throughout the 1960s under the title of *Oh Calcutta*. Perhaps Mark Ravenhill's epic might be renamed *Chopin and Foo Kong*.

**'T**he meaninglessness is terrific," is what Billy Bunter's Indian friend would have said of *No Smoking Day* (see left). Twenty-four hours without nicotine improves your health hardly at all, hurts tobacco companies only minimally. In the best of all worlds the day would be geared to a good cause: Red Nose Day which starts 24 hours after NS Day ends, is such a one. Take the money that you would have given a tobaccoist to the nearest bank or building society, round it up to an even sum, add a nought for generosity and watch the Comic Relief programme on Friday night, luxuriating in your role of supporter of a charity that does and continues to do brilliant work.

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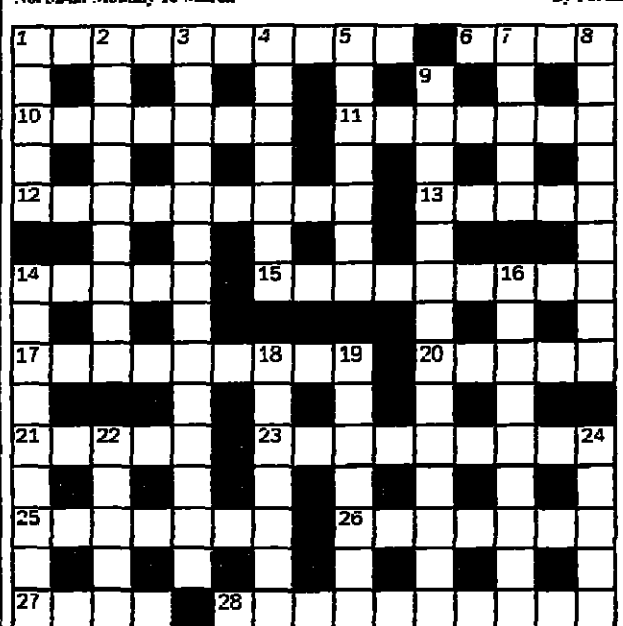
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## THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3242, Monday 10 March

By Porcia



**ACROSS**  
1 Hesitant but keen to retain notes (10)  
6 Unfortunately is in a last minute panic (4)  
10 Coal left on fire (7)  
11 Number maybe groan about unionist's inertia (7)  
12 Working party exercise power (4,5)  
13 Standing ready to cause bother (5)

14 City firm receiving publicity (5)  
15 He mustn't worry about one composer (9)  
17 Superior view of management (9)  
20 One's money is pocketed by the German time-waster (5)  
21 Mostly fly round American islands in the Pacific (5)

23 Mention as possible names (9)  
25 Isn't positive of getting puzzle (7)  
26 Going ahead of directors in a public vehicle (2,5)  
27 Get to hear about trainee leaving (4)  
28 Troopers set out to measure boundaries (10)

**DOWN**  
1 Occupied territory (5)  
2 Charcoal biscuit (9)  
3 Top of the bill? (5,9)  
4 Be terrified about artist's curse (5,2)  
5 Old peasant's horrible home contains many (7)  
7 Archbishop's office (5)  
8 Give royal backing to carrying device (9)  
9 Sure international organisation's suspicious (14)  
14 Replica is agreed in an enamel design (9)  
16 Anxious because of trouble with Australian kid (3,2,4)  
18 Seating arrangement results in a bloomer (7)  
19 Chap hit ball over, ending in a draw (7)  
22 Told way to country house (5)  
24 Take these to be partisan (5)